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GOLDEN JUBILEE

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami** opened 'Veda Nilayam' the residence of Hon'ble former Chief Minister **Puratchi Thalaivi Selvi J Jayalalithaa** at Poes Garden in Chennai, on 28.01.2021, which has been acquired by the Government and converted as a memorial.

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"Hon'ble Amma's Government goes to the people to benefit them in many ways and implements manifold welfare schemes and developmental programmes for the progress of the Country."

- Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami
Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu

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First Wrapper

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami**, inaugurated the memorial of Hon'ble former Chief Minister Puratchi Thalaivi Selvi J Jayalalithaa at the **Bharat Ratna Puratchi Thalaivar Dr. M.G.R.** and **Puratchi Thalaivi Amma Selvi J Jayalalithaa** memorial complex at the Marina Beach in Chennai, on 27.01.2021.

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Hon'ble Governor's address in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly

'Excellent governance, effective response to COVID-19 pandemic, numerous achievements'

Speech delivered by the Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Banwarilal Purohit** in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on 02.02.2021.

Hon'ble Members of the Legislative Assembly,

Vanakkam.

I deem it a great privilege to address the first session of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly for the year 2021. I extend my New Year and Pongal Greetings to each one of you. This is the concluding session of the 15th Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly and I take this opportunity to thank the Hon'ble Members of this August House for their substantial contribution to the development of Tamil Nadu through constructive discussions and debate over many sessions. This Government, under the able stewardship of Hon'ble Chief Minister Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami, continues to be guided by the spirit of the late Hon'ble Chief Minister Puratchi Thalaivi Dr. J Jayalalithaa and has made tremendous strides towards realising the vision of making Tamil Nadu the numero uno State in the Country.

2) We are meeting today in the most unusual and unprecedented circumstances. The world has been struck by the most extensive pandemic in living memory. It is to the immense credit of the Hon'ble Chief Minister that the entire

Government machinery has been effectively mobilised to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. A series of timely and effective measures have been taken.The lockdown was enforced from March, 2020 to break the transmission chain of the disease while ensuring availability of essential supplies. Carefully calibrated relaxations were permitted during the lockdown. Effective disease surveillance through fever camps and testing and tracking measures were ensured. Health infrastructure was strengthened, human resources were augmented and effective treatment protocols were adopted. RT-PCR test kits, medical equipment, PPE kits, quality drugs and medicines were made available in adequate quantity.

3) Tamil Nadu is the only major State in the country that has relied on an exclusively RT-PCR based testing strategy, despite the higher costs. This has ensured that the incidence of the disease was correctly detected and further spread contained. The investments by this Government in public health infrastructure and services have paid rich dividends in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic. Health infrastructure was scaled up to meet the requirements and 1,38,309 additional bed capacity was created in hospitals and COVID-19 health care centres. Oxygen support was extended to 34,849 beds.

4) All these measures have ensured that Tamil Nadu continues to perform very creditably in controlling the spread of the disease and minimising the loss of lives, not just among the States in India, but even at the global level. The Hon'ble Chief Minister has also maintained the continued vigil against a fresh flare up of the disease. I commend the Hon'ble Chief Minister, the Council of Ministers and the entire Government machinery and in particular the frontline workers of the Health, Revenue, Police, Local bodies and other Departments, who have tirelessly worked as a team to combat the COVID-19 pandemic in Tamil Nadu.

5) I would like to place on record my appreciation of the Hon'ble Chief Minister, for his announcement that the entire population of Tamil Nadu would be vaccinated against COVID-19. The delivery of the vaccine has been smoothly rolled out across the State, in the first instance to health care workers, who are in the frontline of the battle against COVID-19. In the next stage, other frontline workers and the most vulnerable would be provided with the vaccine. The Government will cover the entire population in due course, so that normal social and economic activity can be fully resumed.

6) The Government has come out with two path-breaking initiatives. The special legislation reserving 7.5 per cent of Government seats in MBBS, BDS, Indian Medicine and Homeopathy courses for students who have studied from 6th to 12th standard in State Government schools and have qualified in the NEET examination, is a significant advancement of social justice and equity. It is heartening to note that 435 students have benefitted this year. The Government further undertook to defray the entire cost of education and hostel accommodation of these students. This will greatly motivate students in Government schools, who are from a poorer socio-economic background, to aspire for medical education. It will also create a pool of medical professionals willing to serve in remote rural areas of the State. The Hon'ble Chief Minister launched the scheme establishing 2,000 Chief Minister's Amma Mini Clinics which provide free primary health care in remote rural areas and in urban slums. This is already being lauded as a visionary and model

scheme worthy of emulation. The Hon'ble Chief Minister deserves special commendation for these two initiatives.

7) The consistent focus of this Government on providing good governance to the people is now widely recognised. Apart from securing the first position in the Good Governance Index released by the Government of India for the first time last year, Tamil Nadu has been adjudged the overall Best Performing State for the third consecutive year in the 'State of the States'survey carried out by the India Today magazine in November, 2020. This award truly recognizes and highlights the pragmatic, efficient and effective style of governance of the Hon'ble Chief Minister Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami. I congratulate him and the entire Government machinery functioning under him on the accolades that the State continues to win at the National level.

8) 'Responsiveness in governance' is the watchword of this Government. Many grievance redressal mechanisms including the 'AmmaThittam', the 'Chief Minister's Special Grievance Redressal' and 'Taluk Online Petition Monitoring System' and the 'Amma Call Centre' are currently functioning. A new 'Integrated and Inclusive Public Grievance Chief Minister Helpline Management System' (IIPGCMS) is being established. This will integrate all the existing grievance redressal systems through the Chief Minister Call Centre Helpline. With a robust routing mechanism and a dashboard for follow up, time bound redressal of all grievances will be ensured. Citizens will very soon be able to access the Government from the comfort of their homes by calling the Chief Minister Helpline at 1100.

9) Law and Order is the highest priority of the Government. The Police Department's role in tackling the pandemic, especially in contact tracing and in effective enforcement of the lockdown and of containment zones, was particularly significant. Even as the police was fully deployed in enforcing the restrictions, Law and Order continued to be maintained well. Through adequate pre-cautionary measures and by speedy follow up of intelligence inputs, untoward incidents were prevented. The police machinery in the State is fully geared to face all challenges, including the orderly conduct of elections to the Legislative Assembly.

10) Promoting the glory of Tamil language is the foremost goal of this Government. To honour the efforts of those who struggled for the inclusion of Tamil speaking areas into Tamil Nadu, their monthly financial assistance has been increased from Rs.4,500/- to Rs.5,500/- and for their legal heirs from Rs.2,500/- to Rs.3,000/-. The monthly financial assistance paid to Tamil Scholars has been enhanced from Rs.3,500/- to Rs.4,500/- and for their legal heirs from Rs.2,000/- to Rs.2,500/-. The excavations at Keezhadi have yielded rich material remains of the Sangam age culture and the major artefacts will be displayed in a world class site museum that is being constructed by the Government of Tamil Nadu. 3,85,788 words have been uploaded so far in the Sorkuvai Valaaithalam (Word Corpus Website). The State Official Language (Legislative) Commission has so far translated 38 Central Acts into Tamil and is preparing a Law Lexicon in Tamil, in which more than 10,000 words have been compiled so far.

11) The Ninaivu Mandapam befitting the legacy of the late Hon'ble Chief Minister Dr.Selvi J Jayalalithaa has been thrown open to the public. The residence of the late Hon'ble Chief Minister, 'Veda Nilayam', has been taken over by the Government and converted

into a memorial through a special legislation and has been inaugurated. Commemorating the late Hon'ble Chief Minister's remarkable contributions to the field of education, the Tamil Nadu State Council for Higher Education (TNSCHE) campus has been named as the Dr. J Jayalalithaa campus and a 9 ft. bronze statue of the late Hon'ble Chief Minister has been installed there. The birthday of the late Hon'ble Chief Minister Dr. Selvi J Jayalalithaa will be observed as a Government function every year.

12) The 2020-2021 financial year began with a substantial slowdown in economic growth due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken to contain the spread of the disease. In spite of sharply contracting revenues and large additional expenditure requirements, the fiscal situation in this difficult period has been managed deftly. Expenditure on the COVID-19 response, upgrading health infrastructure and on capital works has been stepped up, through reprioritising. The Government has incurred a total expenditure of Rs.13,208 Crore so far on COVID-19 relief and response measures from its own resources.Unlike many other States, Tamil Nadu did not delay or reduce salary payments to its employees. By resorting to timely and cost efficient borrowings, this Government has protected the people of this State from the further adverse impact of COVID-19 pandemic.

13) Tamil Nadu played a key role in the GST Council in resolving the deadlock on payment of compensation to the States on account of the implementation of the GST. Even in this very difficult financial year, this Government has obtained Rs.13,300 Crore so far as GST compensation which includes Rs.4,890 Crore received as borrowings in lieu of compensation as per the mechanism put in place by the GST Council. It is a matter of satisfaction that the error that occured in 2017-2018 in the IGST allocation between the Centre and the States has been rectified and this year, Tamil Nadu has finally received its dues of Rs.4,321 Crore.

14) The Government appointed a High Level Expert Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. C. Rangarajan, former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India and former Chairman of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council, to recommend a series of measures to help important sectors of the economy overcome the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and to support and promote further growth. This Government's action on many recommendations of the High Level Committee report is having a favourable impact on economic growth. We are already seeing strong signs of revival in the economy.

15) With the pro-active approach of this Government to encourage investment in sectors critical to the pandemic response like medical equipment, protective clothing, drugs and pharmaceuticals and the efforts to attract investors seeking to relocate in the aftermath of the pandemic, Tamil Nadu was able to attract an unprecedented Rs.60,674 Crore worth of investment through 73 Memoranda of Understanding generating employment for 1,00,721 persons, even during the pandemic period. Tamil Nadu received the highest share of investment proposals (16 per cent) in India during April to September, 2020 as per the CARE ratings report. Tamil Nadu has been ranked first by 'Projects Today' in attracting investment during the first two quarters of the COVID-19 pandemic period. This reflects the continued confidence that investors have reposed in Tamil Nadu and forms the foundation for the

strong and sustained rebound of economic growth in the State.

16) Tamil Nadu was struck by two cyclonic storms Nivar and Burevi in the year 2020. We have also had unseasonal heavy rainfall in January which has affected crops on the verge of harvest. The proactive measures taken by the Government ensured that the loss of lives and damage to property were minimised. The needs of all the affected people were immediately attended to and essential services were maintained with minimal disruption. These efforts of the Government came in for well-deserved appreciation in the media and amongst the general public. I commend the Hon'ble Chief Minister for his personal leadership in organising the relief work. The Government of Tamil Nadu has presented two Memoranda detailing the damages caused by two cyclones amounting to Rs.3,750 Crore and Rs.1,514 Crore respectively and we urge the Government of India to release funds at the earliest. Even without waiting for the release of Central funds, the State Government has sanctioned Rs.20,000/- per hectare as input subsidy for paddy and Rs.10,000/- per hectare for dry crops, without limiting the amount of relief payable, to all farmers who have suffered severe crop damages. A total amount of Rs.1,715 Crore is being disbursed directly to the bank accounts of 16.78 Lakh farmers affected by the two cyclones and the unseasonal rains in January. This timely assistance has enabled farmers to overcome their distress.

17) The Hon'ble Chief Minister, on 23rd March, 2020 announced cash assistance of Rs.1,000/- to every family with a rice ration card throughout the State, to help tide over the lockdown. Subsequently, further cash assistance was provided to 28,31,535 rice option family card holders in Chennai and its surrounding areas and in Madurai city when an intensive lockdown was declared in the month of June, 2020. Cash assistance of Rs.476 Crore was also distributed to 23,13,957 members of Unorganised Sector Welfare Boards. Based on the Hon'ble Chief Minister announcement, a further cash assistance of Rs.2,500 along with a Pongal gift hamper has been provided to every family in the State with a rice ration card, to provide succour to the populace which has suffered the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the two cyclonic storms and unseasonal rains. This enabled all families in the State to celebrate the Pongal festival joyously and provided a much needed consumption boost to the economy. This cash assistance was in line with the recommendations of Dr. C. Rangarajan Committee.

18) This Government will continue to staunchly protect Tamil Nadu's interests in Inter-State River waters issues. It was the strong initiative of this Government which led to the effective implementation of the Final Order of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal and the judgement of the Supreme Court, with the Government of India notifying the 'Cauvery Water Management Scheme, 2018' comprising the 'Cauvery Water Management Authority' and 'Cauvery Regulation Committee' on 01.06.2018. We have emphatically reiterated to the Government of India that Karnataka should not be permitted to construct any reservoir or diversion structure across the River Cauvery and its tributaries in violation of the judgement of the Hon'ble Supreme Court and without the prior consent of Tamil Nadu. I again urge the Government of India to reject the Mekedatu Project proposed by Karnataka, which is in violation of the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

19) We urge the Government of India that Kerala should not be allowed to construct any new dam across Periyar river in violation of the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court. This Government requests the Government of Kerala and the Government of India to quickly accord the requisite clearances for carrying out the remaining works for strengthening the Mullai Periyar Dam. Due to the initiative of the Hon'ble Chief Minister, the negotiations at the official level, to reach an amicable agreement on the Parambikulam Aliyar Project and other river water issues with Kerala are progressing. As directed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the suit filed by Tamil Nadu, we have requested the Government of India to constitute a Tribunal under the provisions of the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956, to adjudicate the Pennaiyar River Water Dispute.

20) This Government, under the leadership of the Hon'ble Chief Minister, has focussed on conserving and effectively utilizing the scarce water resources of Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu has been awarded the National Water Award 2019 by the Ministry of Jal Shakthi as the best performing State. This is a well-deserved recognition for the initiatives undertaken under the Tamil Nadu Water Resources Conservation and Augmentation Mission, including the hugely popular Kudimaramath scheme. Since 2017-2018, 6,211 works have been taken up under the Kudimaramath scheme at an estimated cost of Rs.1,418 Crore. As part of the Government's efforts to modernize irrigation systems in Tamil Nadu, the Government has accorded approval for the Extension, Renovation and Modernisation of Grand Anaicut Canal System at an estimated cost of Rs.2,639 Crore, with funding from Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Sanction has been accorded for Extension, Renovation and Modernisation of the Lower Bhavani Project at a cost of Rs.933 Crore, which will benefit 2.47 Lakh acres of irrigated land. The implementation of the'Nadanthai Vazhi Cauvery' project has also commenced with the laying of the foundation stone for the construction of the Nanjai-Pugalur check dam across the River Cauvery at a cost of Rs.406 Crore. Work on the Cauvery-South Vellar link, which is the first stage of the Cauvery-Gundar link will be commenced shortly. This Government has sanctioned the long-pending Athikadavu-Avinashi Lift irrigation scheme at a cost of Rs.1,652 Crore. The works are progressing rapidly and the first phase will be completed before March 2021. Similarly, the Sarabhanga Lift irrigation scheme taken up at a cost of Rs.565 Crore, to recharge 100 dry tanks with surplus water from Mettur dam, is expected to be completed by the end of March, 2021.

21) This Government has taken a number of effective measures to protect the interests of our farmers. The Tamil Nadu Protected Agricultural Zone Development Act will protect fertile agricultural lands and safeguard the livelihoods of farmers and agricultural labourers in the Cauvery delta. Through this historic enactment, the Hon'ble Chief Minister fulfilled a long standing demand of the Cauvery delta region and has rightly earned the title of'Cauvery Kaapalan'. After 8 years, Mettur Dam was opened on the due date of 12th June for Kuruvai paddy cultivation. A total amount of Rs.9,312 Crore has been paid to farmers as compensation for crop losses in the last four years under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana. To enable farmers in the State to continue getting the protection of crop insurance, this Government is shouldering substantial additional financial burden to implement the

revamped Prime Minister Fasal Bima Yojana in 2020-2021, even in a context where, the implementation of this scheme has been halted in many States. Tamil Nadu is the leading State in the implementation of Micro Irrigation in the country and Micro Irrigation systems have been established over an area of 6.52 Lakh acres in 2019-2020 with a total subsidy of Rs.1,112 Crore to enhance water use efficiency.

22) The initiatives of this Government since 2011 have resulted in the structural transformation of the rural economy, greatly enhancing the share of the livestock sector in Gross State Domestic Product. Totally 1,06,277 poor rural women have received 1,06,277 milch cows and 12,44,010 rural families have received 49,76,040 goats and sheep since 2011 and 3,60,620 families have received 1,09,40,500 birds in poultry units since 2018. The increase in the number of livestock has been backed by linkages to ensure enhanced and continued availability of fodder, feed, improved veterinary care and sustainable marketing arrangements. The Government has established three more Veterinary Colleges at Thalaivasal, Theni and Udumalpet. The establishment of the Advanced Integrated Institute for Research in Livestock and Animal Sciences at Thalaivasal in Salem District, which is a landmark achievement of this Government is progressing rapidly and the Institute will be functional very soon.

23) This Government is fully committed to protect the traditional fishing rights of our fishermen in their historic fishing waters. This Government strongly condemns the incident in which four fishermen of Tamil Nadu lost their lives when a Sri Lankan naval vessel deliberately collided with their fishing vessel while the fishermen were engaged peacefully in fishing in their traditional waters. This Government has announced a compensation of Rs.10 Lakh for each deceased fisherman's family and a Government related job for a legal heir of the deceased fishermen. We have strongly urged the Government of India to take up this issue with the Sri Lankan authorities. The Government continues to take proactive measures to bring back the remaining 12 fishermen in Sri Lankan custody.

24) Promoting deep sea fishing to enable Tamil Nadu fishermen to take advantage of the Exclusive Economic Zone of 200 nautical miles, is an important priority. Deep sea fishing boats are currently under construction and on shore infrastructure including fishing harbours, fish landing centres, cold storage and marketing facilities are being rapidly developed. Fishing harbours at Thengapattinam at a cost of Rs.97 Crore, Mookaiyur at a cost of Rs.129 Crore and Poompuhar at a cost of Rs.178 Crore and a fish landing centre at Kunthukkal at a cost of Rs.70 Crore have been completed. The construction of fishing harbours at Thiruvotriyur Kuppam at a cost of Rs.200 Crore, Tharangambadi at a cost of Rs.120 Crore, Vellapallam at a cost of Rs.100 Crore and at Mudunagar at a cost of Rs.100 Crore is progressing rapidly. Financial support has been tied up to construct fishing harbours at Azhagan Kuppam, Alamparai Kuppam and Arcottuthurai at a total cost of Rs.385 Crore. The Government has undertaken a number of measures to ensure the safety of fishermen in the deep sea. A seamless satellite based communication system has been established with the assistance of ISRO. The Marine Enforcement Wing with 112 police personnel under the Department of Fisheries has been created.

25) I am happy to inform this August House that Tamil Nadu has implemented the One Nation One Ration Card system, which will greatly benefit poor families who migrate in search of jobs both within and outside the State, to draw their rations. As a measure of COVID-19 relief, 19.95 Lakh metric tonnes additional free rice was supplied to all ration card holders. Dhall, palmolein oil and sugar as per entitlementwere also supplied free of cost to all ration card holders in the State from April 2020 to July 2020. The State Government took on an additional subsidy burden of Rs.5,402 Crore for these measures.

26) As you are well aware, Tamil Nadu is a leading destination for investment. Out of the 304 Memoranda of Understanding signed in the Global Investors Meet, 2019, 81 projects have commenced commercial production and 191 projects are at various stages of implementation. Since the Global Investors Meet 2019, Tamil Nadu has attracted investment into 149 more projects with a cumulative investment of Rs.1,06,664 Crore offering employment to 2,42,705 persons. I compliment the Hon'ble Chief Minister for his direct involvement and proactive efforts in attracting investments on such a large scale even during the COVID-19 pandemic. To encourage investment in sunrise sectors, the Government has announced an Electric Vehicle Policy and an Electronic Hardware Manufacturing Policy which have both proven to be attractive. The New Industrial Policy has been approved by the Government and will be unveiled shortly, providing a further fillip to industrial growth.

27) The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) in Tamil Nadu are not only a nursery of entrepreneurship, but also provide employment to large numbers. Tamil Nadu has 23.60 Lakh registered units with a total investment of Rs.2,73,241 Crore providing employment to 1.52 Crore persons. The new MSME policy has been finalised after consultation with multiple stakeholders and will be released by the Hon'ble Chief Minister shortly. In order to help MSMEs tide over the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government front loaded release of different kinds of subsidies and co-ordinated effectively with banks and financial institutions to ensure that MSME units in Tamil Nadu benefit through the Government of India's 'Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme' (ECLGS). To facilitate quick access to loans under the ECLG Scheme and to provide relief to MSMEs, the Government exempted payment of Stamp Duty for registration of Agreements relating to Memorandum of Deposit of Title Deeds (equitable mortgages) for the period up to 31st March, 2021. The Registration Fee was reduced to 0.1 per cent from 1 per cent for such agreements for micro and small enterprises. To further ease access to formal credit, the Government will amend the Registration Act, 1908 to permit online registration of Agreements relating to Memorandum of Deposit of Title Deeds for availing term loans and working capital loans and do away with the need for the physical presence of borrowers and lenders for execution of such deeds. The Hon'ble Chief Minister personally convened a special State Level Bankers Committee meeting during the pandemic to exhort bankers to lend to MSMEs to enable them to overcome the crisis. Due to these proactive measures, Tamil Nadu had the highest availment amongst all States under the ECLG scheme.

28) The Government will infuse fresh additional capital of Rs.1,000 Crore over three

years into the Tamil Nadu Industrial Investment Corporation (TIIC) to enable TIIC to function as an effective term lending institution and also expand lending operations and cover the large number of MSME units that still do not have access to institutional credit.

29) Tamil Nadu, which is at the forefront of utilising Information and Communication Technology to ensure enhanced public service delivery, was awarded the Gold Award by the President of India, in the 'Excellence in Digital Governance' category at the Digital India Awards, 2020. Large ICT projects of backend computerisation have been effectively implemented including the 'Integrated Financial and Human Resources Management System' (IFHRMS) project which has been successfully rolled out throughout the State. The 'Tamil Nadu Blockchain Policy'aims to introduce front line technology in the e-governance structure of the State, with Tamil Nadu's blockchain backbone, 'Nambikai Inaiyam', enabling seamless and secure delivery of various Government services 'Tamil Nadu Policy for Safe and Ethical Artifical Intelligence' aims to make Tamil Nadu a hub for Artificial Intelligence technology companies and investments. The Government is also committed to ensure the highest standards of security and privacy of data through the recently released 'Cyber Security Policy'. The 'BharatNet Project' will be rolled out to one third of the revenue villages in the State by 31st March, 2021 and to the remaining villages by 30th November, 2021. By combining Bharat Net with TNSWAN, TamilNet and TACTV's broadcast infrastructure, a convergent digital service delivery platform –'Unified Digital Infrastructure'- will be built to deliver high speed, scalable bandwidth to all households in the State.

30) A key element of infrastructure in Tamil Nadu is the supply of quality and reliable power to all consumers. The State continues to be power surplus. In the past 10 years, 15,745 MW of generation capacity has been added to reach a total installed capacity of 32,149 MW. Of this, 16,166 MW of power is renewable energy capacity including hydroelectric power. Large investments have also been made to enhance the capacity of both the transmission and distribution networks to ensure reliable supply of power.

31) The high quality road network of Tamil Nadu sustains economic growth. To improve traffic flow in important cities including Chennai, Coimbatore and Madurai, fly overs and grade separators have been taken up. To provide congestion free access to Coimbatore City, an elevated flyover from Goldwins to Uppilipalayam has been sanctioned at an estimated cost of Rs.1,620 Crore. Tamil Nadu Road Sector Project Phase II with World Bank assistance, Chennai Peripheral Road project with JICA and AIIB assistance and Chennai-Kanniyakumari Industrial Corridor project with ADB assistance are being taken up. Road safety continues to be the highest priority for the State Government and due to concerted efforts, the trend of reducing the number of road accidents and fatal road accidents has continued with the total number of accidents declining from 71,431 in 2016 to 45,489 in 2020 and fatal accidents decliningfrom 17,218 in 2016 to 8,060 in 2020. Tamil Nadu has won the award for the Best State in reducing fatal accidents for the years, 2018 and 2019.

32) The Government is committed to further increasing the ridership share of public transportation in the State by improving the quality of bus transport while maintaining

fares at an affordable level. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there were severe restrictions on the operation of bus transport. The operations of the Transport Corporations are slowly returning to normal with adherence to all pre-cautions to control the spread of the virus.

33) Passenger services in the extension of Phase-I of the Chennai Metro Rail Project from Washermenpet to Wimco Nagar will be inaugurated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister later this month. The foundation stone for the 118.9 km long Chennai Metro Rail Project Phase-II at an estimated cost of Rs.61,843 Crore was laid by the Hon'ble Union Home Minister. The financing for the project has been tied up with JICA, ADB, AIIB and the New Development Bank. We are urging the Government of India to accord formal approval for their equity participation on the 50:50 sharing model for Phase-II of the project.

34) Urban Local Bodies in Tamil Nadu have been at the forefront of the control of COVID-19 pandemic. The various urban infrastructure programmes funded by the Central and State Governments and external aid agencies are being implemented with vigour. Recycling and Reuse of waste water for recharging of urban water bodies is being taken up in a systematic manner. In addition to the two existing 45 MLD Tertiary Treatment Reverse Osmosis Plants,two 10 MLD Sewage Tertiary Treatment Ultra Filtration Plants are under construction at Perungudi and Nesapakkam to recharge Perungudi and Porur lakes.

35) This Government is committed to providing quality housing to the poorest households in urban and rural areas. Each poor family without a house will be provided a concrete roofed house in rural areas and an apartment in a multi-storied building in urban areas. A special additional allocation of Rs.70,000 per house in the rural areas taken up under the Prime Minister Awaz Yojana (Gramin) has been sanctioned, which would enable the speedy completion of 2,57,925 houses under construction in rural areas of the State. With this, as against the unit cost of Rs.1.20 Lakh per house approved by the Government of India under the PMAY-Gramin, the unit cost in Tamil Nadu would be Rs.2.40 Lakh with the State Government's share at Rs.1.68 Lakh per house. The Tamil Nadu Affordable Urban Housing and Habitat Policy has been formulated to expand access to housing in urban areas. The Government has also mobilised financing from the World Bank and Asian Development Bank for urban housing in the State. With simplification of rules and enhanced delegation of powers, the process of granting plan permissions has been considerably speeded up. Through the regularisation scheme for unapproved layouts, 39,939 layouts and 21,86,101 plots have been regularised. Based on wide spread demand to cover left out cases, the last date for applications for regularising layouts which had been formed on or before 20.10.2016, has been extended till 28.02.2021.

36) Protecting forests and increasing tree cover is the highest priority of this Government. Tamil Nadu achieved an increase of 8,302 hectares in forest area and 159 sq. km of tree cover between 2017 and 2019 as per the India State of Forest Report 2019. The State has achieved the 2nd rank in India in forest tree diversity. Protecting the habitat for wildlife has resulted in an increase in tiger population from 229 in 2014 to 264 in 2018.

37) Translating Tamil Nadu's demographic dividend into progress and prosperity requires

the potential of youth to be fully developed. Hence, education continues to be a very high priority investment for this State. Since 2017-2018, nineteen new Government Arts and Science colleges, five Government Polytechnic colleges and three University constituent colleges have been established. In addition, a large number of new courses have been commenced in each of these colleges and investments have been made to upgrade quality in universities and colleges. To facilitate online classes, 9.69 Lakh students in Government and Government aided colleges and those receiving scholarships in self-financing colleges, have been provided a data sim card with 2GB per day capacity for four months.

38) The challenge in the current academic year has been to ensure that there is no loss of continuity in children's education. The various benefits that school children receive, including the nutritious noon meal, text books, note books and school supplies are being distributed to them through the pandemic period. The Government has taken a number of measures to ensure that students are able to access educational content through Kalvi TV and 10 private TV channels. The free distribution of laptops scheme has been effectively leveraged by uploading video lessons through hi-tech labs and multiple internet platforms have been utilised to deliver digital content. The Government has constituted two committees to examine the implications of the New Education Policy of the Government of India for school and higher education in the State. This Government is fully committed to the continuance of the Two Language Policy in the State and there shall be no dilution in this regard.

39) Skill development continues to be a high priority for the Government and the Apex Skill Development Centres (ASDC) in the Auto, Auto components, Machine tools, Hospital and Health Care services, Transportation and Logistics sectors are now functional. A Memorandum of Understanding to establish the Apex Skill Development Centre in the Construction and Infrastructure sector has also been signed.Over and above the on-going Centrally Sponsored Schemes, the Government of Tamil Nadu from its own resources has sanctioned a total amount of Rs.682 Crore for the Tamil Nadu Skill Development Mission since 2013-2014.

40) Tamil Nadu displayed compassion in handling migrant labourers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Free food was provided to Lakhs of construction and other workers throughout the State. Dry ration kits were provided to 22,74,582 unorganised workers and interstate migrant workers. This Government met the cost of repatriation of 4,03,042 migrant workers to their native places through special train services. A portal for Inter-State Migrant Workers has been developed and at present, data relating to 3,16,368 Inter-State Migrant Workers in Tamil Nadu has been uploaded. The compassionate treatment and effective relief measures have meant that many migrant workers have returned to their jobs in Tamil Nadu after the lockdown restrictions were lifted and continue to be important contributors to Tamil Nadu's economy.

41) In order to enhance the welfare of workers in the fireworks and match industry, this Government constituted the Tamil Nadu Fire and Match Worker's Welfare Board on 30th December, 2020.

42) This Government is firmly committed to improve the welfare of working women. Through the implementation of the Chief Minister's Girl Child Protection Scheme, Child Sex Ratio has improved. Special efforts

have been taken to reduce crime against women and children by effective enforcement of legal provisions. The Tamil Nadu Working Women Hostels Corporation Limited has been established to enhance the availability of safe, quality and affordable accommodation for working women. The entire State is being covered under the Tamil Nadu State Rural Livelihood Mission and National Urban Livelihood Mission. Under the Tamil Nadu State Rural Livelihood Mission, Rs.14,000 Crore has been targeted for SHG bank credit linkage. A special COVID Assistance Package at a cost of Rs.300 Crore has been implemented to assist 2,53,457 beneficiaries in 120 Blocks under the Tamil Nadu Rural Transformation Project (TNRTP).

43) Tamil Nadu has been a forerunner in protecting destitute elders, widows, differently abled persons, unmarried women and deserted wives. Totally 33,60,021 persons are receiving social security and old age pension. The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 is being effectively implemented and 3,966 petitions seeking maintenance allowance have been disposed. The State Action Plan for Senior Citizens comprising 5 components will be implemented shortly.

44) This Government is committed to ensuring the full participation of differently abled persons in all realms of socio economic activity. Special care was taken to ensure access of differently abled persons to their basic requirements during the lockdown period and the maintenance assistance was paid two months in advance. A special cash assistance of Rs.1,000 was distributed to all differently abled persons holding National Identity Cards, and Rs.5.31 Crore worth of dry rations and medical kits were provided. Accessibility audit of all public offices is being taken up progressively. A special recruitment drive to fill the special quota of 4 per cent in Government establishments has been launched to clear backlog vacancies intended for the differently-abled.

45) This Government will also continue to implement schemes for the economic development and social advancement of Adi-dravidars, Scheduled Tribes, Backward and Most Backward Classes, Denotified Communities and Minorities. I thank the Government of India for restructuring the post matric scholarship for Scheduled Castes on a 60:40 sharing basis accepting the request of the Hon’ble Chief Minister. We expect that all students currently deriving benefit from the present scholarship scheme will continue to do so under the new scheme as well.

46) Thai Poosam is an important festival of Tamil Nadu and in response to a number of requests from general public, the Government has declared Thai Poosam as a public holiday. From 2011 to 2020, 11,464 temples were renovated and consecrated at a cost of Rs.551 Crore. The retaining walls of Ilamaiyakkinar Temple tank in Chidambaram, which were damaged due to heavy rains in November - December, 2020 are being reconstructed at an estimated cost of Rs.2.61 Crore. The retaining walls of the Nagore Dargah Tank in Nagapattinam, which were damaged due to Nivar and Burevi cyclones, are being reconstructed at an estimated cost of Rs.4.34 Crore. The Government has increased the financial assistance for undertaking the Haj and Jerusalem pilgrimages. The State Minorities Commission will be expanded through suitable legislation to provide representation to linguistic minorities.

47) The year 2020 is an unforgettable year in the history of mankind. We are bound to overcome the pandemic, through will and determination. As a collective, the people of India and Tamil Nadu in particular, have coped with this unprecedented crisis, with the conviction, that the years to come will see renewed progress and development. I use this occasion to place on record my heart felt gratitude to the frontline staff and officials of the Health, Revenue, Police, Local Bodies and all other Government Departments who have worked tirelessly during this period,the Members of this House and all the citizens of the State who have contributed to the COVID-19 pandemic response. I thank each one of you for your contribution.

48) Tamil Nadu has emerged at the forefront in all sectors and has been commended as one of the best administered States in the Country. The State has made tremendous strides in various fields and has won a large number of awards at the National level for exemplary performance. I congratulate and compliment the entire Governmental machinery of the State of Tamil Nadu led by the Hon'ble Chief Minister for this exceptional performance.

49) We are in the last session of the 15th Legislative Assembly of Tamil Nadu. On behalf of the Government, I have outlined various policy initiatives and interventions. There are many achievements of which this Government can be justifiably proud of. All Members of this House have contributed to the democratic debate and deliberations over the last five years and thereby enriched policy content and enabled effective implementation. I wish each one of you a very Happy New Year 2021 and Happy Pongal.

Thiruvalluvar Day

Hon'ble Ministers, Government officials and Tamil scholars and other dignitaries paid floral tributes to the portrait of Thiruvalluvar, kept near his statue on Kamarajar Salai, Chennai, on the occasion of Thiruvalluvar Day on 15.01.2021.

Hon'ble Chief Minister lists manifold achievements in all spheres to applause of all sections of people

Reply of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami** on 05.02.2021, to the motion of thanks to Hon'ble Governor's Address in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly (English Translation).

Bowing to Hon'ble Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma,

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Divine poet Thiruvalluvar asked whether there is anything greater than womanhood.

The word woman stands for Motherhood, Godhood, Sacrifice and Service. 'God, the protector and patron of world, endowed woman with divine wisdom' said Mahakavi Bharathiyar.

Leading a life as a great woman, venerable mother and a model for leadership, Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma fostered us all. Paying obeisance with total dedication to her, I commence my speech.

It was Puratchi Thalaivar M.G.R. who laid the foundation for all our great achievements that make us proudly claim that 'Tamil Nadu is triumphantly marching ahead'. Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma ruled the State to the universal acclaim that "Tamil Nadu is progressing to the number one position".

God assumed female form, became our Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, turned into an embodiment of sacrifice and today stands for all that is divine for us. To the portrait of that

Puratchi Thalaivi, I offer, as a true devotee, the flowers of gratitude that blossom daily in the garden of my heart.

I am happy that my speech begins with the assurance that it is only our rule that will be established again.

At the outset, I thank all the members who have placed here their valuable viewpoints and have been appreciative in the debate on the motion of thanks to the Hon'ble Governor for his address to the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on 02.02.2021, moved by the Hon'ble Member Dr.V.P.B. Paramasivam and seconded by Hon'ble Member Thiru. P.M. Narasimhan.

Our love for the people of Tamil Nadu fetched us the prize of their trust in us, their massive support and the mandate to rule. Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma stated: "I deem it my sacred duty to honour the assurances I have given to those who believed me and voted for me. I have never failed to fulfil the expectations of the poor and the marginalized'.

Hon'ble Amma, and following her, Hon'ble Amma's Government that functions as per her guidelines, not only carried out what we have stated but also many unstated welfare schemes and are providing a higher standard of life to the people who have given us the responsibility of governing the State. As an example for this, of the 644 announcements made under Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly Rule 110 by Hon'ble Amma's Government, Government orders have been issued for 607 announcements. Of them, 198 announcements have been executed, scheme works for 409 announcements are about to be completed, preliminary works on 31 announcements have started, 6 announcements are under central Government's consideration.

Likewise, 568 announcements had been made in the Dr.M.G.R. Centenary events in 32 Districts. G.O.s have been issued for 566. Of them, schemes for 289 announcements have been implemented completely, scheme works on 277 are under progress, starting scheme works for 2 announcements are at a preliminary stage.

I am happy to inform the House that I have inaugurated 48,782 works, valued at Rs.42,144.69 Crore from the date of assumption of office by Hon'ble Amma's Government till date. Further, I have laid foundation stones for 8,012 works valued at Rs.36,912.97 Crore. Totally, 56,794 works valued at Rs.79,057.66 Crore have been undertaken. This is an example of the steps taken by this Government to fulfill the needs of the people.

Hon'ble Amma's Government is implementing many welfare and development schemes, upholding the motto 'peace, prosperity, progress' and having the Vision 2023 document as the basis for the uplift of the people of Tamil Nadu. Schemes implemented as historic achievements by Hon'ble Amma's Government with the blessings of Hon'ble Amma for the welfare of people, are many. At the same time, Hon'ble Amma's extraordinary services for people's welfare and the State's development, bold decisions and ambitious works in the cause of the people are all to be etched in golden letters in contemporary history. To pay respects to such a great people's leader, a huge memorial on the Marina reflecting the selfless life of Hon'ble Amma has been set up. Her residence 'Veda Nilayam' has been converted into a monument

and her life-size statue has been erected in the campus of Tamil Nadu State Council for Higher Education. Likewise, February 24, the birth anniversary of Hon'ble Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma has been ordered to be celebrated as Government function every year.

Hon'ble Amma's Government has been functioning as a Government that goes to the people to implement many schemes for their welfare as well as many development schemes for the progress of the State. At the same time, I wish to firmly state that it was only Hon'ble Amma and following her Hon'ble Amma's Government who have not hesitated to courageously raise the voice of dissent whenever the rights of Tamil Nadu were threatened, conducted legal battles in court when necessary, retrieved Tamil's rights and protected Tamil Nadu's interests as Adhiyaman had safeguarded his Country. Establishing Tamil Nadu's rights in many issues like Cauvery, Mullai Periyar Dam, two language policy and Jallikattu are examples of this.

I am happy to say at this hour that through the consecutive actions and legal battles of Hon'ble Amma's Government, Tamil Nadu's rights have been established in the Cauvery issue, a livelihood issue of Tamil Nadu, and the Cauvery Management Authority and the Cauvery River Water Regulation Committee have been set up. It was Hon'ble Amma's Government that waged a legal battle and got the order for raising the storage level of water in the Mullai Periyar Dam.

Delta farmers developed a fear that their fields would turn into a desert if industries were to be set up in Cauvery Basin. To remove that fear, Hon'ble Amma's Government, headed by me, a farmer, passed a law in a short time to make the delta area, a protected agriculture zone and saved the livelihood of farmers in that area. This law will prevent industries inimical to agriculture from coming up.

Tamil Nadu is monsoon dependent mostly. Even several centuries ago, river water was used in Tamil Nadu to fill up lake, tank, pond and oorani for utilization as drinking water and irrigation. Our ancestors had developed such engineering structures. This helped raise the ground water level. Villages around the river got irrigation facility. The structures ensured water from an overflowing lake reaching another lake automatically. Excellent dams like Grand Anaicut were constructed to make use of the Cauvery river water for irrigation. Creating water bodies like these all over Tamil Nadu, they remained experts in water management.

Water management is most important for economic development. Hon'ble Amma realized the importance of water management and made rain water harvesting a people's movement. On the same lines, Hon'ble Amma's Government also has now initiated an intensive people's movement – Water Resources Conservation and Augmentation Mission - to take forward rain water harvest, to increase the storage capacity of reservoirs and safeguard them, ensure effective utilization of irrigation water, and encourage in a large scale usage of treated sewage and used water on a recycling basis. Works have picked up steam. This Mission is also working as a people's movement comprising Hon'ble Ministers, Members of Legislature and Parliament, private companies, people, NGOs, private and service organizations.

"Perunkula kaavalan pola arungadi annaiyum thuyil maranthanalae" says Sangam poetry. The meaning is that just like the sentinel

of a lake protects it in rains and pitch dark midnight, a mother gives up sleep to protect her child. The act of a mother of protecting her child even as the eyelid protects the eye is compared to the protection of water bodies day and night. Such was the importance given to protecting water resources even in ancient times. Giving importance to water management likewise, Hon'ble Amma's Government has been dredging water bodies, creating new reservoirs on the principle that not a drop of rain water should go waste, and is protecting water bodies even as a mother safeguards her child.

I launched an excellent scheme 'kudimaramathu' on 13.03.2017 to deal with drought in Tamil Nadu and to revive the age-old 'kudimaramathu' scheme for renovating water resources with the participation of beneficiaries. Till date, 6,211 works of 'kudimaramathu' have been taken up in water bodies like lakes, supply channels at a cost of Rs.1,418 Crore. Likewise, 28,623 water bodies under the care of local bodies have been repaired at a cost of Rs.422.60 Crore. The dredging deepens the lakes and Hon'ble Amma's Government framed a scheme to make use of the dredged alluvial soil for application as natural fertilizer in fields, implemented it and succeeded.

Also, the area of cultivation has been increased and last year food production has increased even in drought period. This year, monsoon rain water was stored in a greater measure and all reservoirs have reached their full level. Tamil Nadu is set to achieve a record in food production at the National level in this year.

A three year, Rs.1,000 Crore scheme was framed to prevent rain water draining wastefully into the sea, to divert the water for people's use and to raise the ground-water level. In the last 2 years, works have been taken up at a cost of Rs.934 Crore for construction of check dams across rivers and odais. Like this, 31,834 small check dams have been constructed at a cost of Rs.730.40 Crore through the Department of Rural Development.

In Cauvery irrigation areas, it would take several days for water to reach tail end areas in the past. Since 'kudimaramathu' scheme all over Tamil Nadu and dredging works in Cauvery Delta Districts have been executed effectively, water supply to tail end areas was achieved in a shorter duration. Farmers engaged themselves in cultivation happily.

Hon'ble Amma's Government is the only Government that is implementing the various water resources schemes dreamt by Tamil Nadu people, such as linking of Cauvery- Gundaru rivers, Thamirabarani-Karumeni river-Nambiyaru, Athikadavu-Avinashi, water pumping scheme in Mettur-Sharabanga basin, construction of barrage across Coleroon at Adhanur-Kumaramangalam, a new barrage in Cauvery at Nanjaipugalur and modernization of irrigational agriculture. The water table has raised now in Tamil Nadu due to the effective implementation of rain water harvesting and water management schemes all over the State.

To retrieve Cauvery and its tributaries from pollution totally, similar to the Ganges Cleansing Scheme, a scheme - 'Nadanthaai Vaazhi Cauvery'- has been designed, a Rs.10,711 Crore draft project report for restoration prepared and forwarded to the Union Government's Jal shakti Department for sanction at the policy level.

Hon'ble Amma's Government headed by a farmer is taking many steps for increasing food

production and at the same time safeguarding the welfare of farmers. The area of kuruvai' cultivation in the delta area has gone up to an extent hitherto unachieved in the past 30 years. In the last 9 years, food production has exceeded 100 Lakh metric tonne mark for the seventh time, creating a record. By procuring 32.41 Lakh metric tones of paddy in Government direct procurement centres, the Government has set up a record. Another record is winning 'Krishi Karma' Award 5 times in the last 7 years.

By the way of honouring the farmers' leader Respected late C.Narayanasamy Naidu for his services, the award given at the Republic Day event for highest yield through application of system of rice intensification has been re-named as 'Thiru. C. Narayanasamy Naidu Award' for Efficiency in Paddy Production' from this year and is being conferred from this year. Steps have been taken to set up a centre to preserve traditional varieties of paddy in the name of 'Thiru. Nel Jayaraman', the well known champion of traditional paddy varieties. Thus, Government of Tamil Nadu is honouring the persons who have toiled for agriculture and farmers.

In the last 4 years, the performance of crop insurance in Tamil Nadu has been excellent. A compensation of Rs.9,312 Crore has been issued to about 53.49 Lakh farmers till now. In a new approach in the implementation of the scheme in the current year, a Government order has been issued, sanctioning Rs.1,470 Crore as premium subsidy under the joint insurance scheme. So far, 23.57 Lakh farmers have insured their crops raised in 39.56 Lakh acres.

Under the Micro Irrigation Scheme, through a subsidy of Rs.3,972 Crore, 7.66 Lakh hectares of land have come under irrigation facility in the last 10 years and 7.17 Lakh farmers benefited. I am happy to say that Tamil Nadu has come first in India in the implementation of micro irrigation in the year 2019-2020.

A line in a song (Sathiyam Neeye Dharma Thaaye) sung by Puratchi Thalaivar praises cows as being divine. 'If only they could speak, they would be like gods with the gift of speech' (Vaay mattum irundhaal mozhi pesum deivam). In keeping with this sentiment, the biggest integrated livestock research park in Asia is being set up at Thalaivasal on 1,102 acres of land at a cost of Rs.1,023 Crore. Five veterinary medical colleges have been set up, one each at Thanjavur, Tirunelveli, Salem, Udumalpet and Theni, at a total cost of Rs.275 Crore. Six research cum training centres affiliated to the animal sciences and veterinary university have been started at a cost of Rs.5.10 Crore. Totally, 1,105 veterinary dispensaries at a cost of Rs.83.40 Crore, 440 auxiliary centres (Rs.14 Crore), 15 cattle hospitals (Rs.6.55 Crore) and 8 livestock hospitals (Rs.8.40 Crore) have been started. A very great accomplishment of Aavin is the increase in milk procurement – from 20.26 Lakh litres per day in 2010-2011 to 37.46 Lakh litres at present.

Tamil Nadu was affected by the two successive cyclones 'Nivar' and 'Burevi' at the end of last year. A team of ministers and another team of officers were sent to the affected areas and relief works were hastened. Even while the cyclone was raging, I visited Chembarambakkam lake, inspected its safety and issued orders to officers. The very next day, I visited the cyclone-affected Districts including Cuddalore, consoled farmers and the general public and expedited rescue services. Due to this, loss of life was prevented. The affected people were moved to safe places. Hot,

quality food was supplied. Medical camps were set up and COVID-19 infections prevented. The affected power connections were repaired on a war footing and power supply restored very quickly. Due to these exemplary steps, Tamil Nadu returned to normalcy very soon.

To remove the distress of farmers, the Government of Tamil Nadu allotted Rs.565.46 Crore as a higher rate of input subsidy for the agri and horticulture crops affected by the 'Nivar' and 'Burevi' cyclones and distributed the same.

As per the State Disaster Response Fund rules, the input subsidy for disaster-hit rain-fed crops is Rs.7,410 per hectare, for irrigated crops Rs.13,500/- per hectare and for long standing crops Rs.18,000/- per hectare. On my orders, Hon'ble Amma's Government distributed increased input subsidy at the rate of Rs.10,000/- hectare for rain-fed crops, Rs.20,000/- hectare for paddy and irrigated crops and Rs.25,000/- hectare for long standing crops. The distribution was for the entire area affected, setting aside the ceiling of 2 hectares for eligibility to receive the subsidy.

The very heavy North-East Monsoon rains in January 2021 greatly affected the paddy and other crops that were ready for harvest. Considering the crop loss of farmers, agri and revenue officials were directed to assess the loss on a war footing. It was assessed that 6,62,689 hectares of agricultural crops and 18,645 hectares of horticulture crops had been affected and relief was distributed accordingly. I am proud to say that these steps of the Government of Tamil Nadu have been appreciated by different sections of people. This was made possible by Hon'ble Ministers, Government officers and staff and I convey my hearty thanks and appreciation to them through this House.

On learning of the outbreak of Corona virus in China, I acted with focused attention from January 2020 and accelerated the steps to be taken. When the first occurrence of virus infection was detected in Tamil Nadu on 07.03.2020, multi-pronged measures were quickly taken up at the field level. People of Tamil Nadu accepted my kind request for 'social distancing, vigilance, remaining in one's residence' and extended their co-operation. Due to our joint efforts, the percentage of recovery today is the highest in Tamil Nadu in the whole of the Country. The percentage of mortality is the lowest in Tamil Nadu, not only in relation to India but to the whole world. The Government of Tamil Nadu continues to be acclaimed for this by the Hon'ble Prime Minister, medical experts, Public Health experts, newsmen and non-partisan personnel.

Corona tests have been conducted on about 1.54 Crore people in Tamil Nadu. Totally, 254 laboratories – 68 Government and 186 private –have been set up all over Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu is conducting the highest number of RT-PCR tests in the country. Of these tests, 78 per cent has been done in Government labs. The mortality rate has come down to 1.47 per cent.

All necessary medical appliances and medicines for recovery from this virus infection are supplied to hospitals uninterruptedly. Zinc and vitamins tablets are being distributed at no cost to all field workers and to people residing in containment areas. For a co-ordinated disease management, indigenous treatment along with allopathic medicine is given. To increase immunity in people, the siddha medicinal

'kabasura kudineer' is distributed to large sections of people.

I have conducted consultative meetings with all District Collectors 14 times and with medical experts 14 times. Consultative meetings headed by the Chief Secretary to Government with District Collectors were held for a similar number of times. If the virus spread is less in Tamil Nadu than in other States and the number of affected persons is less than 500, it is due to the holding of such monthly meetings and the exemplary action of District Administrations as per Government advice. Besides, I toured all Districts, held consultation meetings with District Collectors and instructed them to pay greater attention and take action.

Tamil Nadu could control this infection because of the splendid medical infrastructure and selfless service of doctors, nurses, conservancy workers and other Government staff.

On the advice of the Dr. Rangarajan committee, a cash amount of Rs.2,500/- and a Pongal gift hamper inclusive of sugarcane, was given to about 2.06 Crore rice card holders for celebrating the Pongal festival with rejoicing even during the Corona period. I wish to inform that Thai Pongal was celebrated well in all families this year.

At present, 2,000 'Chief Minister's Amma Mini Clinics' are being set up in areas bereft of Primary Health Centres and largely populated by the poor for providing treatment to ailments like ordinary fever. Each mini clinic will have a doctor, a nurse and an assistant. We have created a situation where the poor can get treatment in their own areas. We consider this as a historic achievement.

When it came to be known that a vaccine has been found to control the Corona virus from spreading, the first State that announced the provision of this vaccination to all people at no cost was Tamil Nadu. To implement this programme with focus, teams have been set up at the State and District levels. Steps are being taken to immunize, as per Central Government's guidance, 20 per cent of the population on a priority basis, that is to 1.6 Crore people before the end of this current year. I firmly state that this scheme will be successfully implemented and Tamil Nadu will be made a Corona-free State.

I wish to inform this House that the Government of Tamil Nadu has so far spent Rs.7,604.80 Crore towards virus control and relief works.

Hon'ble Amma's Government has issued a historic order for a sub-quota of 7.5 per cent to fufill the dream of Government school students to become doctors, because of the NEET examination. On this basis, 336 Government school students got admission in medical college and 99 students in dental colleges. The Tamil Nadu Medical Services Corporation has been directed to set up a Rs.16 Crore Revolving Fund. From this fund, Hon'ble Amma's Government will directly pay the students college, hostel and similar fees.

The number of higher secondary school in Tamil Nadu is 7,809. Of these 3,056 are Government schools. The total number of 12th standard students in the State is 8,41,251. Of them 3,44,485 study in Government higher secondary schools. Their percentage is 41. Last year, only six students from Government schools could clear the NEET examination

and join medical college. At present the number of medical seats is 3,650. Of these, 7.5 per cent seats are available to Government school students. We have now created a situation wherein 435 students from Government schools could study medical courses through the 7.5 per cent sub-quota for 41 per cent Government school students.

Government schools have more of poor students. It is Hon'ble Amma's Government that has realized their dream of becoming a doctor. The number of medical seats in Tamil Nadu at the end of DMK rule in 2011 was 1,945. In Hon'ble Amma's rule, this was raised to 3,060 – an increase of 1,115. After I assumed office as Chief Minister, I have raised this number of seats to 3,650. Now, as a historic achievement, 11 new medical colleges have been created in just one year. Through these colleges, 1,650 medical seats are to be made available.

After I assumed office, in the first phase, 590 students got the opportunity to study medicine. Now, an opportunity has been created for 1,650 persons to study medicine through the new 11 medical colleges. Totally, in the last 4 years, our Government has created opportunity for 2,240 more students to join medical colleges.

Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, in her rule from 2011, created opportunities for 1,115 more students to join medical colleges. After her demise, steps taken by Hon'ble Amma's Government created opportunities for 2,240 more students to study medicine. From 2011 to 2021, it was our Government that provided the opportunity for 3,355 more persons to study in medical colleges. The total number of seats in medical colleges in Tamil Nadu will be 5,300 from the coming academic year.

In the last 10 years alone, Hon'ble Amma's Government started 17 new medical colleges and set up a historical record.

The visionary aim of Hon'ble Amma and Hon'ble Amma's Government is ensuring the prosperity and safety of Tamil Nadu fishermen through caring, using and managing fisheries' resources without depletion and paving the way for safe fishing. With this outlook, Hon'ble Amma and Hon'ble Amma's Government have been implementing many welfare schemes like providing relief during the periods of fishing banning and fish conservation, on the path shown by Puratchi Thalaivar, so as to light up the lives of fishermen. Modern communication gadgets like satellite phone, NAVIC and NAVTEX are given to deep sea fishermen for receiving radio alerts on weather. In the last 10 years, 4 fishing harbours have been constructed at a cost of Rs. 501 Crore and 8 more are being constructed at an estimate cost of Rs.939 Crore. Fish landing centres have been constructed at 29 places at an estimate cost of Rs.282 Crore. In 14 more places they are being constructed at an estimate cost of Rs.232 Crore.

The great challenge Hon'ble Amma had to face when she took over administration of the state in 2011 was power cut. The earlier minority DMK Government had plunged the State into darkness and taken it to the dark ages. Declared and un-declared power cuts for many hours was the order of the day. This was due to the failure of the earlier DMK Government to set up new power plants. No proper attention was given to it.

Hon'ble Amma designed new schemes and implemented them on a war footing. Following her, Hon'ble Amma's Government implemented visionary schemes. As a result of

these, the installed power capacity has doubled in the last 10 years – from 16,883 MW in 2011 to 32,149 MW.

The rise in the number power sub-stations to 1,823 from 1,343, in energizing EHT lines to 35,622 CKT km from 24,018 CKT km, electricity consumers to 3.14 Crore from 2.23 Crore and agricultural connections to 21.57 Lakh from 19.73 Lakh were all achievements of Hon'ble Amma's Government.

Additional power obtained through new power plants and renewable energy has been integrated in transmission infrastructure. The steps taken in the last 10 years by Hon'ble Amma and following her Hon'ble Amma's Government have resulted in uninterrupted power supply in the State with no possibility for any mention of power cut. I am proud to State that Tamil Nadu has continued to be a power surplus State.

Hon'ble Amma's Government is taking many steps to create the best human resources in the future in tune with Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivar's song:' Dear boy! This country's hope lies in good kids. History waits to be written through their little hands (Nalla nalla pillaigalai nambi/indha naade irukkuthu thambi/ chinnachiru kaigalai nambi oru sarithiram irukkudhu thambi).

Two hundred and forty-eight primary schools have been newly started. 117 primary schools have been upgraded into middle level schools, 1,079 middle level schools into high schools and 604 high schools into higher secondary schools. This has facilitated location of schools nearby the residential areas of students. This has increased the number of the educated persons and Tamil Nadu has today attained the honour of being highly literate State.

To stop the phenomenon of drop outs in schools, 14 types of articles like text books, note books are being distributed at no cost to students for the last 10 years at a cost of Rs.22,285 Crore. Also, laptops are distributed at no cost to students to help students excel in Information Technology. In the last 10 years, laptops costing Rs.7,337.50 Crore have been distributed to 52.31 Lakh students.

Under the distribution of bicycles at no cost scheme, launched to help students to commute to school easily, 59.77 Lakh bicycles costing Rs.2,119.38 Crore has been distributed in the last 10 years.

To facilitate students prosecute higher education, 7 Law Colleges, 21 Polytechnic Colleges, 4 Engineering Colleges, 5 Veterinary Colleges and 40 Arts and Science Colleges have been started. As a result of opening colleges in such a scale, Tamil Nadu has become the premier State in higher education studies.

Due to Corona virus infections, school students continue their education through the Tamil Nadu Government's 24-hour 'Education TV' and through online classes. To help college students join online classes, 2GB data (per day) Cards are distributed by the Government at no cost to 9.69 Lakh students.

These steps of Hon'ble Amma's Government have improved human resources in Tamil Nadu. The percentage of enrolment in higher education has increased from 32.9 in 2010-2011 to 49 now, pushing Tamil Nadu to the first place in the country.

Hon'ble Amma's Government gives importance to the sports field. In employment

in Government sector, a 3 per cent sports quota has been created. Excelling sportspersons are absorbed in public sector units.

Transport is the life-breath of socio-economic development. Realizing this, Hon'ble Amma's Government completed widening/ developing works in 23,705 km long roads, renovation works in 12,013 km long roads and construction of 77 bridges and 614 culverts in the last 10 years. To reduce traffic congestion in the metros of Chennai, Coimbatore, Salem and Madurai, construction of single tier and two tier flyovers was taken up at an estimate cost of Rs.848.88 Crore. Two hundred and seventy-eight river bridges were constructed at an estimate cost of Rs.355.82 Crore, 34 railway over bridges/under bridges/limited use subways at a cost of Rs.1,103 Crore and 4 flyovers at a cost of Rs.244.10 Crore. One thousand six hundred and twenty panchayat and panchayat union roads, running to a length of 4,326.50 km were upgraded at a cost of Rs.2,265.74 Crore. Sanction has been accorded for setting up a flyover on Avinashi Road in Coimbatore city from Gold wins to Uppilipalayam at an estimate cost of Rs.1,621.30 Crore and construction works are on.

To improve transport facility in Chennai, Tamil Nadu's important industrial city, the Metro Rail Project has been successfully put into operation. Under stage 1 of this Project, two rail tracks were laid for a length of 45.1 km at a cost of Rs.18,380 Crore and they are in use fully. Passenger service is to start shortly in the 9 km extension from Washermanpet to Wimco Nagar under this first stage. I wish to state that Hon'ble Union Home Minister laid the foundation stone on 21.11.2020 for the Metro Rail Project stage II which envisages execution of 3 metro rail corridors running to a length of 118.9 kms at a cost of Rs.61,843 Crore.

On behalf of the Transport Department, 14,489 new buses were purchased at a cost of Rs.3,321.62 Crore in the period 2011 to 2021 for public use. In this period, 1,532 new bus routes were also put into operation.

To avert the increasing traffic congestion at the Puratchi Thalaivar Dr.M.G.R. Bus terminal, Koyambedu and surrounding places caused by the arrival of buses from other States, construction works for a new bus terminal for buses from the Southern Districts were started in March 2019 on 88 acres of land at Keelambakkam, Vandalur village at a cost of Rs.314 Crore and the works are about to be completed. Construction works have started for a new bus terminal for the buses coming from western parts of the state at Kuthambakkam village, Thirumazhisai on 25 acres of land at a cost of Rs.307 Crore.

As for Drinking Water Supply Schemes, 1.57 Crore rural and urban people have benefited from 90 Combined Water Supply Schemes executed at a cost of Rs.6,994 Crore in the last 10 years. Through special water supply schemes in 85 Municipalities and Town Panchayats, implemented at a cost of Rs.1,362 Crore, 49 Lakh people have benefited. Through treatment of 214 million litres sewage from 32 underground sewerage schemes, set up at a cost of Rs.1,328 Crore, 23.26 Lakh people benefitted. In rural areas, 3,97,000 water supply schemes have been taken up at an estimate cost of Rs.6,686 Crore. Pipe connections were given to 11,43,557 houses at a cost of Rs.508.18 Crore. New water resources, making available 225 million litres per day (225 MLD) inclusive of the availability of 100 MLD from

the desalination plant at Nemmeli, have been created at a cost of Rs.914.42 Crore to meet the drinking water needs of Chennai city. Works on setting up two 550 MLD desalination plants at a cost of Rs.7,337.78 Crore have started. In the extended 40 places of Chennai, water supply schemes were taken up at a cost of Rs.1,260 Crore. Works were completed in 19 places and water supply has started. Underground sewerage schemes were taken up in 25 places at a cost of Rs.1,286 Crore. Works have been completed in 15 places and the sewerage is in operation.

Two tertiary sewage treatment plants with a capacity of 45 MLD were set up at a cost of Rs.834.21 Crore for use in industries and they are in operation. Through this, Chennai city has become the only city in India to recycle 20 per cent of the sewage water. The setting up of reservoirs at Kannankottai and Thervoy Kandigai at a cost of Rs.380 Crore have strengthened the measures to meet the needs of drinking water supply to Chennai.

Steps taken by Hon'ble Amma's Government in consonance with the sentiments of a song of Mahakavi Bharathiyar that we will produce weapons, good paper/we will set up factories, educational institutions (Aayudham seivom, nalla kagidham seivom/ aalaigal vaippom, kalvi salaigal vaippom), resulted virtually in an industrial revolution in Tamil Nadu.

Through the 98 MoUs signed by the various Departments at the Global Investors Meet-2015 and the 10,073 MoUs signed in the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises sector, investments of Rs.2,42,160 Crore were guaranteed. Through this, job opportunities were created for 4,70,065 persons. Seventy-two per cent of these schemes came into operation in 5 years, guaranteeing Rs.73,711 Crore investment and job opportunities for 1,86,838 persons.

Following this historic achievement, the second Global Investors Meet was held in 2019 and 304 MoUs were signed and they hold the possibility of an investment of Rs.3,00,501 Crore and job opportunities for 10 Lakh persons. Of these, I am happy to inform 81 schemes – that is 27 per cent - promising an investment of Rs.24,492 Crore and job opportunities for 1,10,844 persons started their commercial production just in one year and thus accomplished. Further, 191 schemes guaranteeing jobs for 5.33 Lakh persons on an investment of Rs.2.20 Lakh Crore are in different stages of progress.

Through my foreign tour, investments worth Rs.8,835 Crore have been attracted to Tamil Nadu from 41 institutions and new job opportunities have been created for 35,000 persons.

In the last Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly session, I announced about a new scheme - 'Yadhum Ooray' – to get the suggestions of Tamils living all over the world for improving Tamil Nadu industrial development further and invite world Tamils desirous of starting industries in Tamil Nadu with a red carpet. I inaugurated that scheme in the USA.

Impressed by Hon'ble Amma Government's actions, 'Project Today' establishment in Mumbai, in its survey has mentioned that Tamil Nadu has captured the premier place in attracting new investment and in creating new job opportunities even during the COVID-19 period.

In the current year of COVID-19 alone, 73 MoUs were signed, holding the possibility for

creation of one Lakh employment opportunities on an investment of Rs.60,674 Crore.

Moreover, foundation was laid for many projects like that for an IT Park by the DLF company at an investment of Rs.5,000 Crore, Ascendas Radial IT park at an investment of Rs.1,500 Crore, Tidel Park scheme at Pattabhiram at an investment of Rs.250 Crore and a modern Aerohub scheme at the Aerospace Park, Sriperambudur at an investment of Rs.250 Crore.

The high-level committee, headed by me, reviews the progress of each and every investment scheme and provides necessary guidance. Besides, I have directly reviewed the schemes for 62 big industrial ventures with a total investment of Rs.39,941 Crore and they have been cleared immediately.

A State-level Bankers Meet, presided over by me, was held to facilitate loan facilities for industrial entrepreneurs and for MSME entrepreneurs. As a result of this meet, loan facilities to the tune of Rs.11,539.61 Crore were made available to industrial entrepreneurs.

At a time when international flights were grounded due to corona virus, Government undertook many steps for uninterrupted industrial investments. It was the Tamil Nadu Government that introduced a special facility, the first of its kind in India, for world investors to have a 3D view of lands in SIPCOT industrial parks through the internet from their own places. Through this facility, the nature of the land, infrastructure facilities including roads could all be inspected and application for land could also be sent through the Internet.

Due to Hon'ble Amma's Government steps, investments in industries are turning towards Tamil Nadu in a larger scale. Hence, I wish to state that Tamil Nadu's Economy will attain its normalcy very soon and it will continue to be in the forefront.

By setting up a welfare board for about 4 Lakh workers in fire cracker and match box industries in the unorganized sector, including the 62,661 such workers now under the Manual Labour Welfare Board, Tamil Nadu has become a model state in India in providing social security to workers in the unorganized sector.

Recently 4 fishermen of Rameswaram area who sailed from Pudukkottai were attacked by the Sri Lankan Navy and they died. As a relief, I directed disbursement of Rs.10 Lakh to each of the victim's families. I also directed a Government job to one member of each family on the basis of eligibility and under the usual rules.

While condemning the Sri Lankan Navy's attack on Tamil Nadu fishermen, I wish to inform this House that I have urged the Hon'ble Prime Minister in person and through letters that such events should not continue and that the Central Government should intervene in the matter, hold talks with the Sri Lanka Government and find a permanent solution for this.

A very important reason for this occurrence is the handing over of Katchativu to Sri Lanka. All people know who did that. Hon'ble Member Thiru. Thamimun also knows it.

I wish to inform a few of the welfare programmes Hon'ble Amma's Government is implementing for Adi Dravidar and Scheduled Tribes people.

• Adi Dravidar Housing Development Scheme at a cost of Rs.100 Crore annually. For the same scheme, basic facilities for

22,695 dwellings at a cost of Rs.2,500 Crore through the Rural Development Department.

• Recently, the Central Government has announced about the 60:40 ratio in the disbursement of post-matric scholarship. This is due to the pressure exerted by Hon'ble Amma's Government and on the basis of Tamil Nadu's views. Countless schemes like these are being implemented for the welfare of Adi Dravidar and scheduled tribes.

Following Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivar M.G.R. and Hon'ble Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, Hon'ble Amma's Government also remains as a protective shield to the minorities. Hon'ble Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma was the first person in the whole country to have implemented a scheme to provide financial assistance to Christians in Tamil Nadu to go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Accepting the request of that community, Hon'ble Amma's Government increased that assistance to Rs.37,000/- from Rs.20,000/-. It was Hon'ble Amma's Government that hiked the subsidy for renovation and repairing of churches to Rs.5 Crore from Rupees One Crore.

Though the subsidy for Haj pilgrimage was ordered to be stopped in a phased way (by a Supreme Court order), Hon'ble Amma's Government continues to provide the subsidy. Accepting the request of that community, the subsidy has been raised to Rs.10 Crore from Rs.6 Crore. Likewise, raising the subsidy for repairs and renovation of mosques, dargahs and other Wakf Board institutions to Rs.5 Crore from Rs.60 Lakh was by Hon'ble Amma's Government. Again, it was Hon'ble Amma's Government that made the allocation of Rs.15 Crore for the construction of a Haj House. Works on it are in a preliminary stage. For repairing the parapet wall around the Nagoor Dargah Tank, Hon'ble Amma's Government gave Rs.4.34 Crore.

Interested in the welfare of the linguistic minorities in Tamil Nadu – Telugu, Malayalam, Kannadam, Urdu, Sourashtram and Marathi – Hon'ble Amma's Government created a "Tamil Nadu Linguistic Minorities Socio-Economic Development Corporation" and thus paved the way for their socio-economic development.

Thai Poosam is celebrated as an important festival in Tamil Nadu. On the basis of the requests made by different sections of the people, I am proud to say Hon'ble Amma's Government has declared Thai Poosam Day as a Government holiday.

With a good maintenance of law and order, Tamil Nadu remains as a Garden of Peace. As a pioneering scheme in India, Hon'ble Purartchi Thalaivi Amma's Government created a separate wing for crime against women and children and it is functioning excellently. To ensure the safety of women and children, helplines like 'Kavalan app', 'Women helpline 181', 'Children helpline 1098' were activated effectively and crimes have been prevented greatly. In whole of India, Chennai city has the largest number of CCTV cameras and criminal activities have been greatly reduced.

Hon'ble Amma's Government continues to take action to bring about amendments in the Indian Penal Code to make punishment for crimes against women and children more stringent. Police acted quickly in the recent burglaries at Muthoot Finance and Lalitha Jewellery and on the murder in Mayiladuthurai, traced the culprits and earned the appreciation of all. Tamil Nadu continues to be regarded

as an excellent state, reducing traffic accidents greatly. This is due to the creation of very good infrastructure and the commendable activities of the traffic police.

As a forerunner to the entire country, Hon'ble Amma's Government implemented the 'Police Wellness Programme' at a cost of Rs.10 Crore for safeguarding the mental health of constables and members of their families. It is to be mentioned that 95,000 police constables and their families benefited.

I wish to inform this House that the police hospital in Chennai will be upgraded into a full-fledged hospital catering to all primary medical disciplines so as to give all types of high-tech treatment/surgeries to police constables and their family members. Police Residential Schools, on the lines of one in Chennai, will be set up in Tiruchirappalli, Coimbatore, Madurai, Tirunelveli, Salem, Cuddalore and Vellore to help the wards of police constables get quality education.

The Chief Minister's Special Grievance Redressal Scheme was launched by me on 19.08.2019. So far, 9,77,638 petitions have been received from people. Of these, 5,22,812 petitions have been accepted. Among these petitioners, 1,44,348 persons are given pension under the social security scheme.

Government proposes to implement a 'Chief Minister Help Centre cum Integrated Grievance Redressal Management Scheme' at at a cost of Rs.12.78 Crore. This is based on the realization of the need for immediate registration of public grievances and a management system for their redressal. Under this scheme, the petitioner can upload the grievances in respect of various Government Departments in one portal and they will be examined immediately and redressed. I will launch this scheme soon.

On 19.09.2020, I inaugurated an upgraded portal of the Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation which will have a section dealing with skill registration, integrated at the State level, to benefit youth who have received skill training and institutions providing important jobs. With a view to connecting the unemployed in Tamil Nadu with institutions in the private sector offering jobs through Internet and providing employment opportunities, I inaugurated a portal – Tamil Nadu Private Job Portal (www.tnprivatejobs.tn.gov.in) – designed exclusively by the Employment section of the Department of Employment and Training, on 16.06.2020. Through this portal, 14,167 job seekers have got appointments.

To exhibit the articles excavated at Keezhadi, the torch-bearer of the ancient history of Tamils, I laid the foundation for a 'Site Museum' to be set up at an estimate of Rs.12.21 Crore at Konthagai village, Sivagangai District. Construction is in progress. The Government of Tamil Nadu has given financial assistance for setting up a Tamil Chair in Harvard and Houston Universities and thus sowed the seeds for Tamil Research.

To create a slum-free Tamil Nadu, the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board is implementing many housing development schemes and community welfare works. In the last 10 years, 3.36 Lakh apartments have been constructed at a cost of Rs.11,011 Crore.

The Tamil Nadu Housing Board has constructed 33,575 new houses at a cost of Rs.4,436.24 Crore. work on 23,502 houses is progressing at an estimate cost of Rs.4,679.50 Crore. Under the House for All scheme, 4,72,401 houses are being constructed at a cost of Rs.23,426.41 Crore for people residing in urban slums.

Under the Chief Minister's Solar Powered Green House scheme, construction of four Lakh houses were taken up on an allotment of Rs.8,119.22 Crore and so far 3,75,416 houses have been completed. Under the Prime Minister Housing Scheme (Rural), construction of 5,73,340 houses at an allotment cost of Rs.9,746.78 Crore were taken up between 2016-2017 and 2019-2020 and so far 3,21,849 houses have been constructed. Under the 'Own House' scheme, construction of 90,000 houses on an allotment of Rs.900 Crore was taken up and completed. Under the scheme for houses constructed through Government schemes, 45,594 houses were taken up at an estimate cost of Rs.227.97 Crore in 2018-2019 and all the works have been completed. I have raised Tamil Nadu Government's contribution of Rs.50,000/- for fixing the ceiling of houses constructed for the poor and vulnerable to Rs.1,20,000/- from Rs.50,000/-. This has raised the unit cost of the houses under the Prime Minister Rural Housing Scheme to Rs.2,40,000/- from Rs.1,70,000/-.

When economic growth had come down due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the steps taken to control its spread, the 2020-2021 financial year set in. The revenue receipts diminished drastically and additional expenditure mounted hugely. Yet the Government managed the financial position fairly well in these difficult times. Priority was given to COVID-19 rescue and relief measures, improvement of health infrastructure and to capital expenditure and expenditure mounted. From its own resources, the Government of Tamil Nadu has so far spent Rs.7,604.80 Crore for relief and rescue steps for COVID-19.

The Government allotted Rs.7,604.80 Crore and spent the amount for COVID-19 treatment and relief works. The break up is: Rs.913.16 Crore for procurement of medical appliances. Rs.159.75 Crore for medical constructional works. Rs.454.08 Crore towards expenditure on workers. Rs.735.39 Crore for Corona general management and welfare works. Rs.32 Crore as State's share for National Health Movement. Rs.262.25 Crore for isolation expenses. Rs.143.87 Crore towards migrant workers. Rs.1,727.63 Crore under PDS scheme and cash relief Rs.3,176.67 Crore. In the above expenditure, Rs.5,364.24 Crore was allotted from State Government's financial resources, Rs.2,087.14 Crore from the State Disaster Management Authority and Rs.153.42 Crore from Chief Minister's Public Relief Fund.

The Central Government announced a scheme for raising additional loan from market for managing the critical financial position due to the Corona virus infection if State Governments took up some reforms. Experts opined that the State economy, already affected greatly will deteriorate further and there is no alternative to borrowing at this hour and that this is not the time to hesitate to get loans. Accordingly, the Government of Tamil Nadu has so far obtained Rs.28,880 Crore from the Central Government. By getting the loans at low rates at the appropriate time, this Government has saved the people of Tamil Nadu from the impact of this severe pandemic.

Under the Smart City Scheme of the Central Government, approval was obtained to implement the scheme in 11 cities at the most, the highest in the country, and 579 works were taken up at a cost of Rs.11,000 Crore. 174 works have been completed and 298 are under way.

The Central Government has selected Tamil Nadu as the foremost State in India in governance.

❖ I wish to state at this hour that 'India Today' magazine, appreciating Tamil Nadu's governance has been presenting the 'Best State' award for 3 years consecutively.

❖ The Central Government Jal Shakti Ministry has presented the 'Best State' award to Tamil Nadu for water management. Vellore and Karur Districts bagged the first two places in restoration of water bodies and Perambalur District, second place in safeguarding water bodies.

❖ Tamil Nadu has been selected as the premier State in organ donation in the whole of India and it has received Central Government's award in this regard for it six times consecutively.

❖ This year, the Government of Tamil Nadu got the Central Government's 'Digital India -2020 Gold Award' in the section the Best State in e-governance.

❖ In the implementation of 'Protection of female children. Education of female children' scheme, Tamil Nadu has been selected as the front runner State and awarded as such. Likewise, it got the Central Government award for the best State in offering service to senior citizens.

❖ The Public Affairs Centre of Bengaluru selected Tamil Nadu as the second best State.

❖ The Central Government has presented appreciation certificates and prize money to 26 Government hospitals and 47 Government Primary Health Centres for best performance under the National Quality Assurance Scheme.

❖ Further, Hon'ble Amma's Government has received many awards like 'Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme' Award, computerization of the public distribution system award, renewed energy Department award, awards for quality medical services, awards to Transport Corporations, awards for best performance of Municipalities and more number of awards for Rural Department. It has thus got the honour of being the Best State.

❖ Like these, every Department of Tamil Nadu Government has received countless awards from the Central Government and many public companies and Tamil Nadu continues to set records as an award winning State.

I assumed administrative responsibility as Chief Minister on 16.02.2017. Opposition partymen, including the Leader of the Opposition wondered how long my Government would last and fixed a time limit of their own as three or six months. But, as if to carry out Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma's vow – 'After me, however many the centuries that roll by, the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam will function only for the welfare of the people" – we are to complete 4 years of rule and step in on the 5th year on 15.02.2021 on account of our excellent implementation of people's work.

Today some people have launched a campaign that is contrary to truth, asking people to reject this Government. But people of Tamil Nadu want this rule to continue for the following reasons….

❖ It was Hon'ble Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma's Government that established Tamil Nadu's rights on the Cauvery river waters and paved the way for the setting up of the Cauvery Water Management Authority and the Cauvery River Water Regulation Committee.

❖ It was Hon'ble Amma's Government that had the level of water to be stored in Mullai Periyar Dam raised.

❖ For 20 years, the Mullai Periyar Dam was operated through generator. Now, after 20 years, the dam is operated through electricity by getting power again from the Kerala Government.

❖ It was Hon'ble Amma's Government that gave gold for 'thaali' for the marriage of poor women.

❖ Hon'ble Amma's Government distributed subsidized two-wheelers to working women and fulfilled Hon'ble Amma's scheme.

❖ By providing bank loan to women Self Help Groups to the extent of Rs.81,052 Crore, Hon'ble Amma's Government has helped women stand on their own legs for their economic needs.

❖ Hon'ble Amma's goal was to provide quality food at reduced prices through Amma Unavagam and Hon'ble Amma's Government is implementing it.

❖ It is Hon'ble Amma's Government that has distributed laptops, bicycles and data cards to students at no cost.

❖ Hon'ble Amma's Government has realized the dream of Government school students to become doctors by creating a 7.5 per cent sub-quota in undergraduate medical courses.

❖ Hon'ble Amma's Government set up a historic record by establishing 11 new Government medical colleges in one year.

❖ Hon'ble Amma's Government has attained the glory for Tamil Nadu becoming a highly literate State due to the opening of schools, colleges and medical colleges in a large scale.

❖ The Government that has retrieved the tottering Tamil Nadu in darkness and turned it into power surplus State and is supplying today uninterrupted electricity is Hon'ble Amma's Government.

❖ Hon'ble Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma's Government is turning Tamil Nadu into a water surplus State through wonderful schemes.

❖ Hon'ble Amma's Government gave priority to increase job opportunities to the youth through attracting industrial investments on a large scale.

❖ Hon'ble Amma's Government has earned a good name through controlling the Corona virus infection to world admiration and Hon'ble Prime Minister speaking appreciatively to the extent of glorifying Tamil Nadu.

❖ The Government that has retrieved the right to hold jallikattu sport and thus fulfilled the long-standing dream of the people of southern Districts, is Hon'ble Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma's Government.

❖ In the interest of delta farmers and in realization of their dream, it is Hon'ble Amma's Government that has set up the Protected Agricultural Special Zone.

❖ It is Hon'ble Amma's Government that has created a revolution in food production through the 'kudimaramathu' scheme and stored the monsoon rain water without wasting even a drop of water through dredging lakes, tanks, ponds etc.

❖ It is Hon'ble Amma's Government that has got the highest compensation in India to farmers through the crop insurance scheme.

❖ Hon'ble Amma's Government increased milk production to an unimaginable level and thus set up a record.

❖ Also, it is Hon'ble Amma's Government that has created 6 new Districts in deference to the request of people and for their convenience.

❖ Countless schemes like these have been implemented by Hon'ble Amma's Government. These are all only a small sample.

Besides implementing countless development schemes including the Athikadavu-Avinashi scheme to benefit drought areas, Gundaru-Cauvery Link scheme, Lower Bhavani development scheme and construction of check dams across rivers to increase water resources as those at Adhanur-Kumaramangalam, Nanjaipugalur and many other places, many more development schemes have been prepared for future implementation like those of financial tech city, a new airport at Chennai, Cauvery Development scheme, Thamirabarani-Vaipparu scheme, Integrated Tourism Development Scheme and Co-ordinated vehicle parking scheme at Chennai.

People, gathering like ocean waves wherever I go, appreciate all these schemes. They want this rule to continue. People's verdict is God's verdict!

There is not even an iota of doubt that Hon'ble Amma's Government will score a hat-trick by coming to power again in the State, implement countless schemes more and more and take Tamil Nadu ahead in the path of growth. The great support shown by people wherever I go is the evidence. Hon'ble Amma's soul that resides in people's hearts even today will support us forever.

After the Assembly election also, there will be no change in the seating in the Assembly. we will continue to be on the ruling side and opposition members will continue to be in their seats. I say this with firm confidence. I believe that the optimism of members will bear fruit.

I hope I have duly replied to Hon'ble Members. If there is any omission of their demands, Government will take note of them and take appropriate steps. I thank Hon'ble Speaker, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, Hon'ble Ministers, Hon'ble Members Legislative Assembly and to the people of Tamil Nadu. Requesting members to pass the motion of thanks to Governor unanimously, I conclude my speech.

Nandri! Vanakkam!

Demanding permission to hold jallikattu events, agitations were conducted in many places in Tamil Nadu in 2017. Jallikattu agitation is an emotional stir for establishing the rights of the people of Tamil Nadu. Many joined the agitation to express their sentiments. During this agitation, many cases were registered for the maintenance of law and order. Yet, some undesirable incidents took place as part of the agitations. Taking into account the fact that those who agitated sentimentally had also been included in these cases, I wish to state that Hon'ble Amma's Government headed by me will withdraw cases, after getting the opinion of legal experts, barring a few which cannot be withdrawn like those dealing with attack on the police and cases of arson. ■

Hon’ble Amma’s Memorial declared open

Hon’ble Chief Minister pays glorious tributes to matchless leader with memorable achievements

Speech of the Hon’ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami** on 27.01.2021, after declaring open Hon’ble Amma’s memorial on the Marina Beach, Chennai (English Translation).

Bowing to Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma,

Hon’ble Deputy Chief Minister Brother Thiru. O. Panneerselvam who has delivered a special address in this ongoing event, got up to declare open the memorial for Hon’ble former Chief Minister Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma in the renovated Ponmana Chemmal Puratchi Thalaivar M.G.R. memorial, Hon’ble Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Hon’ble Ministers, Hon’ble Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, former Minister and serving Rajya Sabha Member Brother Thiru. K.P. Munusamy, former Minister

and serving Rajya Sabha member brother Thiru. Vaithilingam, former Minister and present Avai Thalaivar of AIADMK Thiru. Madhusudhanan, senior executives of AIADMK, Tamil Nadu Government's Special Representative, Hon'ble Members of Parliament, Hon'ble Members of Legislature, Chief Secretary to Tamil Nadu Government, Director General of Police, higher officials Government of Tamil Nadu, top officers of Police Department, Board Presidents, former members of Parliament and Legislature, Elders, Ladies, Blood unto Blood dear party cadres who have unflinching affection and love towards Ponmana Chemmal Puratchi Thalaivar M.G.R. and Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, the youth brigades, sisters from the women's wing of the party, Newsmen and Media friends – my affectionate respects to all of you.

It is God's gift that Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma was born in this soil on 24th February 1948 to protect the (AIADMK) movement and the people of Tamil Nadu. Amma completed her school education at the Church Park Convent creditably. From a very young age, she showed interest in arts and exhibited skills in that field, she learnt Bharatanatyam in a systematic way. Puratchi Thalaivi Amma was a leader capable of speaking in many languages. Her debut in the Tamil cine world was through the film 'Vennira Aadai'. Through her excellent performance in films, she created a place of her own in the hearts of people. She paired with Ponmana Chemmal Puratchi Thalaivar M.G.R. in many films and gained fame and name. Our Amma got many awards, inclusive of 'Kalaimamani' and 'Filmfare' due to her excellent contribution to the film Industry. She joined the AIADMK.

Hon'ble Amma was appointed as a member in the high-level committee of nutritious meal scheme when it was implemented by Ponmana Chemmal Puratchi Thalaivar M.G.R., she laid the foundation for the scheme's success. After Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivar M.G.R. selected Hon'ble Amma as Secretary in charge of policy propaganda, she made a whirlwind tour of Tamil Nadu and developed the party. In 1984, Ponmana Chemmal Puratchi Thalaivar sent her to Rajya Sabha as a member. The then Prime

Minister Indira Gandhi appreciated greatly Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma's debating skill in the Rajya Sabha. The 1989 Assembly election was the first election she contested and it brought her the honour of being the first woman to become the Leader of Opposition (in Tamil Nadu). After Puratchi Thalaivar M.G.R.'s demise, Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma integrated our party in 1989, became the General Secretary and led the party. She ruled Tamil Nadu as Chief Minister for 15 years and six months and accomplished the feat of capturing power for the second successive term after a lapse of 36 years.

By guiding the party and administration of the State with a military discipline, she made the entire women folk proud. She earned the name 'Iron Lady' and was acknowledged even by her enemies as 'Courageous'. Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma demonstrated that a regional party could become the third largest party in Parliament, this caused astonishment and pride among people as no other leader in Tamil Nadu had achieved this historic feat till then. Like an affectionate mother, she took care of the people of Tamil Nadu and implemented many pioneering schemes, keeping the poor and marginalized sections of society in mind. Setting up a record as the first woman Chief Minister in the whole of India to be in power for the largest number of days, Hon'ble Amma gave many schemes to the people.

It is a common knowledge that Tamil Nadu is successfully marching on the path of growth by acting on the 'taraka' mantra of 'Peace, Prosperity and Progress' vouchsafed by Hon'ble Amma and by maintaining the State as a Garden of Peace. It is our Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma who laid the foundation for Tamil Nadu to become the premier State in India through the declaration of 'Vision 2023' document. With the motto 'I am for the people; by the people', Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma thought only of the people day and night, acted on her motto and succeeded. Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma implemented the 69 per cent reservation, established social justice and became the "Warrior and Protector of Social Justice". Hon'ble Amma, became 'Ponniyin Selvi' by relentlessly waging a court battle and succeeding in getting the Supreme Court judgment on Tamil Nadu's share of Cauvery water published in the Central Government Gazette. She thus paved the way for protecting the livelihood of the people of the Cauvery delta. Not only that, it was Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma who succeeded through litigation for storing water in the Mullai Periyar Dam to a higher level. For resolving the water problem of Chennai, it was Puratchi Thalaivi Amma who implemented the new Veeranam project.

Welfare programmes implemented by Puratchi Thalaivi Amma were praised globally. Many implemented those programmes in their countries. Like Puratchi Thalaivar M.G.R.'s Nutritious meal scheme, Puratchi Thalaivi Amma implemented many schemes such as 'Cradle Baby' scheme to protect female babies, 'Amma Unavagam', distribution of mixie, grinder and fan at no cost to bring about a real change in the life of the poor, rice,

laptop, bicycle, educational appliances, school uniform, mother-child baby care kit etc., – all at no cost and lighted up the lives of the people. She forumulated the Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme to enable the common man get medical treatment in private hospitals on par with the affluent. Through the great rain water harvesting scheme, she laid the foundation for improving water resources in Tamil Nadu. Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma showed how the Government machinery should function during times of natural disasters like tsunami, rains and floods.

The courage and efficiency she exhibited in maintaining law and order and protecting the welfare of women fetched Hon'ble Amma the sobriquet 'Iron Lady with a tender heart'. Hon'ble Amma was the 'Protecting Deity' for many families as she enabled them to retrieve their assets through the Land Grab Protection Act, she implemented schemes for immediate redressal of people's grievances, distributed motorized three-wheelers to the differently abled, fed devotees in temples, announced 50 per cent reservation for women in local bodies, announced distribution of two-wheelers at a subsidized price to working women. She also implemented 30 per cent reservation for women in the Police Department, introduced all-women fair price shops and libraries and encouraged the poor and differently abled persons through countless schemes such as 'Amma Micro Loan Scheme'.

Besides financial assistance for marriage, Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma also gave gold for 'Thali' to orphaned women. Like the Government service homes for women to stay safe, Puratchi Thalaivi Amma designed and implemented many pioneering schemes. Hon'ble Amma's Government too, in the footsteps of Amma, continues to function as a protective armour for women and children. That Hon'ble Amma was naturally endowed with all the qualities needed for a leader is a matter for the present generation of youth to note. One can easily see that many women in Tamil Nadu who are not interested either in party or politics,

unhesitatingly take the name of Hon'ble Amma when asked about their role model and many women yearn to be like Hon'ble Amma.

Hon'ble Amma implemented countless welfare schemes in many sectors like school education, higher education, health, transport, infrastructure, industry, agriculture, water management, fisherfolk development, energy development, youth welfare, backward class welfare, Adi Dravidar welfare and sports, in such a way that all sections of people hail her rule as the golden era of Tamil Nadu.

The credit of turning Tamil Nadu into a great State of achievements by accomplishing many things which no other state could do, scoring victories and winning awards, should go to Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma. The exceptional achievements notched by Hon'ble Amma for Tamil Nadu's development, the bold decisions taken and the services rendered to the people, all of them deserve to be etched in golden letters in contemporary history.

By way of respecting such a big leader, this huge memorial has been set up on the Marina beach befitting Hon'ble Amma's selfless life. For constructing this memorial, sketches were received from expert architects globally, selection was done by a team of experts so that the memorial design gets the appreciation of all and the task was completed within the scheduled time frame. With the phoenix bird as the insignia, the exquisite memorial comprises a smart park, a granite pavement, lawn, pools and a compound wall. It was a great opportunity for all of us to learn politics and the art of administration from Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma who had the above stated qualities and much more. We can consider this opportunity as a gift bestowed by God. We have set up this beautiful memorial for people to know Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma's excellence and greatness and as an example for the future generations. I dedicate this memorial to people with a heavy heart. I wish to state that Ponmana Chemmal Puratchi Thalaivar M.G.R.'s mausoleum also will be renovated.

Only Hon'ble Amma is lovingly called Amma by all. To that extent, only our Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma was deeply loved by all sections of people.

At this hour, I convey my appreciation to the staff and workers of Public Works Department and Information Department, technicians and all others who have contributed their services to set up this mausoleum for Hon'ble Amma in a way to world's admiration and to find a place in history. I affectionately request all the participants in this event, all party cadres and executives returning by vehicles to safely go back to their homes.

I thank Respected Dr. K. Manivasan I.A.S., Principal Secretary, PWD, the kingpin behind the creation of this gigantic and beautiful memorial and all the engineers who worked with him. I thank Respected Thiru. Mahesan Kasirajan I.A.S., Secretary, Department of Tamil Development and Information and his officials for organizing this event and all the good hearts who have participated in the event. With this, I take leave of you.

Nandri! Vanakkam!

‘Hon’ble Amma’s contribution to state will be etched in golden letters’

Hon’ble Chief Minister unveils Amma’s statue

Excerpts from the speech delivered by Hon’ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami,** after unveiling the statue of Hon’ble former Chief Minister Puratchi Thalaivi **Selvi J Jayalalithaa,** in the Tamil Nadu State Council for Higher Education Complex in Chennai on 28.01.2021 *(English Translation)*.

Bowing before the Goddess Puratchi Thalaivi Amma.

At the outset I welcome all those who have come for this function.

Everybody knows the uniqueness of the Hon’ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma. Whatever she did, she did extremely well with grace and beauty. Whatever the challenges, she faced them with courage and triumphed over them through her acumen and talent. It is God’s gift that Hon’ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma always thought about the welfare of others and formulated schemes for them. Hon’ble Amma always provided solace to the distressed. Hon’ble Amma’s services to the people are immeasurable.

The present Government of Tamil Nadu, which follows in the footsteps of Puratchi Thalaivi Amma is like a fortress to the rights of women and protects their rights. Hon’ble Amma made Women Police wear khaki uniforms like men police so that both men and women police are considered equal. For the first time in the Country, Hon’ble Amma formed women commandos, to investigate the crimes against women. Hon’ble Amma set up women Police Stations in all Districts, Hon’ble Amma’s Government, for the first time in the country, started women and children crime protection wing Police, which has been functioning efficiently. To ensure the safety and protection of women and children, the Government started ‘Kavalan app’, 181 Helpline for women and 1098 helpline for children. Through these means, many crimes against women and children have been averted. The Central Government is being moved to amend the law to award severe punishments to those who indulge in crimes against women and children.

I am happy to know about the increasing participation of women in various fields, including medicine, writing, the legal field and folk arts. That the majority of women in the State have taken Hon’ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma as their role model signals the fact that women will become a major force.

Though the number of women leaders and bureaucrats were less in number, it was compensated by Hon'ble Amma by her presence in politics. Everyone knows the steps taken by Hon'ble Amma's Government to take the youth and student community in the path of progress. For example, in the last 4 years, more funds have been allotted for education. In the course of the last 4 years, 10 new University constituent Colleges, 7 Government Arts and Science Colleges and 3 Government Polytechnics have been opened. In the first phase, 14 of the 41 University Constituent Colleges have been converted into Government Arts and Science Colleges. New Government Law Colleges have been opened in Villupuram, Dharmapuri, Ramanathapuram, Salem, Namakkal and Theni. New Medical Colleges and Medical Colleges Hospitals have been opened in 11 Districts at a total cost of Rs. 3,995 Crore. Through these colleges, 1,650 new medical seats have been created. Last year, out of Government school students, who constituted 41 per cent of the total students, only 6 got admission in medical colleges.

To increase the representation of Government school students in medical colleges, the Government enacted a law for 7.5 per cent preferential allotment to enable more Government school students to join medical colleges. We have made provision for students belonging to poor and the downtrodden sections of society, to join the medical course.

We have sanctioned Rs.1,200 Crore as education fee to 5.72 Lakh first generation students. 120 Government Higher Secondary schools have been improved as model schools at a cost of Rs.33.69 Crore. At the international level, Tamil Nadu is the only State which gives laptops at no cost to students. Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, with a view to providing international standard of education to the poor students of the State sanctioned laptops worth Rs.12,000/- each at no cost to the students. I am happy to announce that Hon'ble Amma's Government has distributed laptops to 52 Lakh students in the State at no cost.

To encourage sports talent among youth, the Government has allotted 3 per cent quota in jobs in Government and Government-owned corporations for the best sportspersons.

To improve the enrolment of students in education, Hon'ble Amma's Government has been upgrading the primary schools into middle schools, middle schools into high schools and high schools to higher secondary schools.

As mentioned by Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, in the year 2011, when Hon'ble Amma was the Chief Minister, 32 per cent of the students had higher education. Hon'ble Amma created a revolution in education by allocating more funds for education. Due to higher allotment, the percentage of students pursuing higher education has increased to 41 per cent, the highest in the Country.

The role played by Hon'ble Amma for the welfare of the people of Tamil Nadu, for the growth of the State and the bold decisions taken by her should be etched in golden letters in the contemporary history of Tamil Nadu.

For such a leader, yesterday we opened a Memorial on the Marina. In continuation of this, Hon'ble Amma's Veda Nilayam Memorial House was declared open earlier in the day to enable people to visit the house today and learn lessons from her life.

As a fitting tribute to Hon'ble Amma's contribution to higher education, Amma's Statue was declared open in the Tamil Nadu State Council for Higher Education Complex. For this I congratulate Hon'ble Minister for Higher Education Thiru. K.P. Anbalagan and the Principal Secretary of Higher Education.

From this year onwards, the birth anniversary of Hon'ble Amma on 24th February will be celebrated on behalf of the Government. On that day, the statue of Amma will be garlanded on behalf of the Government. I thank all those who made excellent arrangements for this function.

Nandri! Vanakkam!.

Hon'ble Chief Minister declares open Amma's residence as Memorial

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami declared open on 28.01.2021 as a memorial complex, 'Veda Nilayam', the residence of Hon'ble former Chief Minister Puratchi Thalaivi Selvi J Jayalalithaa at Poes Garden, Chennai, that had been taken over by the Government.

Hon'ble former Chief Minister Puratchi Thalaivi Selvi J Jayalalithaa was born on February 24, 1948. She was praised as 'Kalai Selvi' in the South Indian film world. As a member of the Rajya Sabha and later of the Legislature, Puratchi Thalaivi Amma continued her public life and got the distinction of becoming the first woman Leader of the Opposition in Tamil Nadu. Winning the 1991 general election for the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly, she assumed the office of Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. Hon'ble Amma won the Assembly elections held in the years 2001, 2011 and 2016, gave an excellent rule for 15½ years as Tamil Nadu Chief Minister by implementing many welfare schemes and carved out an indelible place for her in the hearts of the people.

Hon'ble Chief Minister announced on 17.08.2017 that Hon'ble former Chief Minister Puratchi Thalaivi Selvi J Jayalalithaa's residence 'Veda Nilayam' would be taken over by Government and

converted into a memorial so as to make known to people her greatness, achievements and the sacrifices she had made for the country.

Accordingly, the house was nationalized and a Trust – Puratchi Thalaivi Dr. J Jayalalithaa Memorial Trust – with Hon'ble Chief Minister as the President was set up to safeguard the articles used by the former Chief Minister.

Hon'ble Chief Minister declared open today (28.01.2021) the Government-owned 'Veda Nilayam' a Memorial House in the presence of Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister Thiru. O. Panneerselvam.

The 'Veda Nilayam' house is located on 10 grounds and 322 sq.ft land. The frontage of the house has been renovated by the Government, maintaining it as it obtained when she resided there.

Cleaning and painting works have been taken up all over the house such as her personal room, library, office room, guest room, drawing room and conference room.

125th Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subash Chandra Bose

In connection with the 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subash Chandra Bose, Hon'ble Ministers Thiru. D. Jayakumar (Fisheries, Personnel and Administrative Reforms), Thiru. Kadambur Raju (Information and Publicity), Thiru. P. Benjamin (Rural Industries) and Thiru. K. Pandiarajan (Tamil Official Language, Tamil Culture and Archaeology) and Secretary to the Department of Tamil Development and Information Thiru. Mahesan Kasirajan I.A.S., on behalf of the Tamil Nadu Government, paid floral tributes to his portrait, kept near his statue at Marina Beach, Kamarajar Salai, Chennai on 23.01.2021.

Arrears of 16.43 Lakh farmers amounting to Rs.12,110 Crore to be written off

Chief Minister waives loans of farmers whose crops were affected by storms, rains

Speech of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami** under Rule 110 in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on 05.02.2021 (English Translation).

Farmers are the lynchpin of the world as they sustain all, including those who are not part of the agricultural industry, is the saying of Valluva Perunthagai. (Kural 1032: Uzhuvaar ulagathaarkku aani-aq thaatraadhu/ ezhuvaarai yellaam poruthu). A country's prosperity depends on its agriculture. That is why Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma gave greater importance to prime sectors including agriculture, designed many schemes and allotted more funds to implement them. Hon'ble Amma's Government headed by me which follows that path without swerving, also frames many schemes to safeguard the welfare of farmers and to ensure that agriculture prospers, and implements them continuously.

Hon'ble Amma's Government headed by me is implementing in an excellent manner, many schemes such as effective water management schemes through 'kudimaramathu' and different irrigation development schemes, micro irrigation to foster agro industries, integrated farming, joint farming, development of agro marketing centres, scheme to set up supply chains to encourage vegetable and fruit cultivation, high-tech cultivation and crop insurance scheme. In agriculture-dependent sectors like Animal Husbandry and Fisheries also, Hon'ble Amma's Government has effected admirable development. On account of this, the share of animal husbandry in the State's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is increasing.

Hon'ble Amma's Government is in the forefront to extend a helping hand to farmers and protect them whenever they are in distress. That is why Hon'ble Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma waived agricultural loan arrears of Rs.5,318.73 Crore as on 31.03.2016, when she again assumed office as Chief Minister in 2016. This benefited 12.02 Lakh Small, Micro farmers.

To farmers who sustained loss due to the severe drought in 2017, Hon'ble Amma's Government gave Rs.2,247 Crore as drought relief. Following this, the Government headed by me, is implementing many welfare schemes for the prosperity of farmers and other schemes to improve the agriculture infrastructure.

In 2019-2020, many of the world countries were greatly affected on account of the Covid-19 pandemic. This had an impact in Tamil Nadu also and normal life took a hit. Agriculture too was affected. The 'Nivar' and 'Burevi' cyclones and the unseasonal heavy rains on the month of January have all caused heavy crop loss, pushing farmers who had cultivated the crop borrowing loans, into great difficulties. This disaster damaged not only the paddy, sugarcane, plantain and horticulture crops that had been ready for harvest but also rain-fed crops to a great extent.

Hon'ble Amma's Government headed by me, which is ever interested in the welfare of agriculturists, ordered, without waiting for Central Government's release of funds, immediate distribution of Rs.1,717 Crore to 16.43 Lakh farmers as input assistance for the cultivated crop and the amount is credited directly to farmers' bank accounts. Though this input assistance may remove farmers' distress, Hon'ble Amma's Government felt that they should be helped to resume cultivation. Moreover, farmers and different farmers associations are insisting, taking into account the heavy damages to the cultivated crops, on the waiver of the standing crop loans.

Hon'ble Amma's Government, headed by me, is functioning on the lofty sentiment that it is not enough to uplift the persons who have fallen down, they should also be helped to gain strength. So, I am happy to inform you that considering the present situation, the loan arrears amounting to Rs.12,110 Crore of 16.43 Lakh farmers who had obtained crop loan from co-operative banks, will be waived. I reiterate that considering the present situation, the loan arrears amounting to Rs.12,110 Crore of 16.43 Lakh farmers who had obtained crop loan from co-operative banks, will be waived.

"Only a person who loves more will help more". I am also a farmer, I love farmers greatly. This step is taken from the standpoint that my first duty is to remove the distress of farmers. Through this measure, ways and means have been opened to 16.43 Lakh farmers who have crop loan arrears, to continue cultivation in the coming year without any difficulty. During the 2006 Assembly election, the DMK promised to give 2 acres of land to farmers who don't have land of their own but the party could not redeem the promise at all. This is a truth known to the people of Tamil Nadu. Likewise, the Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition promised during the 2019 Parliament election that after their victory farmers' crop loans in co-operative banks would be waived off. Their candidates and those of their alliance parties won 38 seats in that election. After winning the election they forgot their promise. This is the usual way they adopt in every election. People of Tamil Nadu know very well that the AIADMK Government alone redeems the promises made during the election.

Hon'ble Amma and Hon'ble Amma's Government do as they speak, they say only the things they will do, they also do other good things not spelt out.

I wish to inform this House that besides waiving the crop loans, a Government Order will be issued and financial resources for the waiver will be indicated in the coming budget itself. This announcement will be implemented immediately.

Nandri! Vanakkam! ■

G.O. writes off farmers' Co-operative Bank loans

சுருக்கம்

கூட்டுறவு – மாண்புமிகு தமிழ்நாடு முதலமைச்சர் அவர்களின் சட்டமன்ற பேரவை விதி எண். 110ன் கீழான அறிவிப்பு – 31.01.2021 அன்று நிலுவையிலுள்ள கூட்டுறவு வங்கிகளில் பயிர்க் கடன் பெற்ற 16,43,347 விவசாயிகளின் கடன் நிலுவைத் தொகை ரூ.12110.74 கோடி தள்ளுபடி – ஆணை வெளியிடப்படுகிறது.

கூட்டுறவு, உணவு மற்றும் நுகர்வோர் பாதுகாப்பு (சிசி1)த் துறை

அரசாணை (நிலை) எண். 15

நாள்: 08.02.2021
சார்வரி வருடம், தை 26,
திருவள்ளுவர் ஆண்டு 2052.

படிக்க:

1. மாண்புமிகு முதலமைச்சர் அவர்கள் தமிழ்நாடு சட்டமன்ற பேரவை விதி எண்.110ன் கீழ் ஆற்றிய உரை, நாள் 05.02.2021. (த.நா.ச.பே.எண்.01).
2. கூட்டுறவு சங்கங்களின் பதிவாளரின் (மு.கூ.பொ) கடிதம் எண்.ந.க.6666/2021 வேகதி2, நாள் 05.02.2021.

ஆணை:

மாண்புமிகு முதலமைச்சர் அவர்கள் 05.02.2021 அன்று சட்டமன்றப் பேரவையில், சட்டமன்றப் பேரவை விதி எண்.110–ன் கீழ், கூட்டுறவு வங்கிகளில் பயிர்க்கடன் பெற்ற 16.43 இலட்சம் விவசாயிகளின் கடன் நிலுவைத் தொகையான 12,110 கோடி ரூபாய் தள்ளுபடி செய்யப்படும் என அறிவித்தார்கள்.

2. மேற்காணும் மாண்புமிகு முதலமைச்சர் அவர்களின் அறிவிப்பினை செயல்படுத்த, கூட்டுறவுச் சங்கங்களின் பதிவாளர் தமது 05.02.2021 நாளிட்ட கருத்துருவில், மாண்புமிகு முதலமைச்சர் அவர்களின் அறிவிப்பினை நிறைவேற்றும் பொருட்டு 31.01.2021 அன்று நிலுவையில் உள்ள 16,43,347 விவசாயிகளின் ரூ.12,110.74 கோடி பயிர்க்கடன்களை தள்ளுபடி செய்து ஆணை வழங்குமாறு அரசைக் கேட்டுக்கொண்டுள்ளார்.

3. கூட்டுறவுச் சங்கங்களின் பதிவாளரின் கருத்துருவினை அரசு கவனமுடன் பரிசீலித்து, மாண்புமிகு முதலமைச்சர் அவர்கள் 05.02.2021 அன்று சட்டமன்றப் பேரவையில், சட்டமன்றப் பேரவை விதி எண்.110–ன் கீழ் அறிவித்தவாறு 31.01.2021 அன்று கூட்டுறவு வங்கிகளில் நிலுவையில் உள்ள 16,43,347 விவசாயிகளின் பயிர்க்கடன் ரூபாய் 12,110.74 கோடியை தள்ளுபடி செய்து அரசு ஆணையிடுகிறது.

4. இத்திட்டத்தினை செயல்படுத்த தேவையான நிதி அரசால் கூட்டுறவு வங்கிகளுக்கு வழங்கப்படும். இத்திட்ட செயலாக்கம் தொடர்பான விரிவான வழிகாட்டு நெறிமுறைகள் தனியே வெளியிடப்படும்.

5. இந்த அரசாணை நிதித்துறையின் ஒத்திசைவுடன், அத்துறையின் அ.சா.கு.எண். 673/இ.செ (கூ.உ.ம.நு.பா)/2021, நாள் 08.02.2021 –ன்படி வெளியிடப்படுகிறது.

(ஆளுநரின் ஆணைப்படி)

தயானந்த் கட்டாரியா
அரசு கூடுதல் தலைமைச் செயலாளர்

Tamil Nadu celebrates 72nd Republic Day with traditional enthusiasm and pageantry

Republic Day celebrations held on behalf of the Tamil Nadu Government began with great enthusiasm at Kamarajar Salai, Chennai on the morning of 26.01.2021. Escorted by the Traffic Police on motorcycles, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami, arrived at the venue of the function, waving his hands to convey his Republic Day greetings. The Chief Secretary to the Government, Thiru. K.Shanmugam, received the Hon'ble Chief Minister at the venue by handing over a bouquet of flowers.

Soon after, the Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu, Thiru. Banwarilal Purohit, escorted by IAF personnel on motorcycles, came to the function venue and conveyed his Republic Day Greetings to the people in the visitors' gallery. He was received on the dais by the Hon'ble Chief Minister with a bouquet of flower.

Later the Hon'ble Governor was introduced to commanders of three Forces and the Officials of the Police Department by the Hon'ble Chief Minister. The Hon'ble Governor then hoisted the National Tricolour Flag to the accompaniment of the Police Band. The Hon'ble Governor, the Hon'ble Chief Minister and those who had assembled, paid their respects to the National Flag. An IAF helicopter which flew low and showered flowery petals on the tricolour was the cynosure of all eyes.

Following this, there was a march-past parade by the Army, Navy and IAF, IAF planes carrying the models of fighter planes, Missiles, Helicopters, Heavy Vehicle Factory Vehicles, Coast Guard, Ex-Servicemen, CRPF, CISF, RPF, Tamil Nadu Special Police (Men and Women) and Tamil Nadu Commando Force (Men and Women), Cavalry, Prison Security Forces, Home Guards, Fire Service Department, NCC and Combined band teams of various forces. The Hon'ble Governor took the gurad of honour of these forces.

Awards for Gallantry:

The Hon'ble Chief Minister then presented Gallantry Awards, including Anna Medals. Anna Medal-2021 (Government Servants) – Tmt.P.Mullai, B.T. Assistant (English), Pulivalam Government High School, Sholinghur, Ranipet District, Dr.A.Prakash,

M.V.Sc., PGD, Forest Veterinary Assistant Surgeon, Hosur Forest Division, Salem District, Thiru. J.Suresh, Loco Pilot, Tirumangalam, Madurai District. Anna Medal (General Public) was given to Thiru. R.Pugazhendiran of The Nilgiris District.

The Kottai Ameer Communal Harmony Award to Thiru. K.A.Abdul Jabbar of Coimbatore District for the year 2021.

Erode Precision Farm Producer Company Ltd., and Velliangiri Uzhavan Producer Company Ltd., got the Best Performing Farmer Producer Company Ltd., in Governance and the Tamil Nadu Banana Producer company Ltd., and Virudhai Millets Farmers Producers company Ltd., won for their best performance.

Gandhi Adigal Police Medal to Tmt. T.Magudeeswari, Women Inspector of Police, Prohibition Enforcement Wing, Greater Chennai Police, Thiru. N.Selvaraju, Sub-inspector of Police, Central Investigation Unit, Salem Zone, Thiru. S.Shunmuganathan, Head Constable, Srivilliputhur Taluk Police Station, Virudhunagar District, Thiru. S. Rajasekaran, Head Constable, Central Investigation unit, Tiruvannamalai District. The first prize for the Chief Minister's Best Police Station Award was won by Salem Town Police Station, the second prize by Tiruvannamalai Town Police Station and the Third Prize by J-4 Kotturpuram Police Station, Greater Chennai Police.

Thiru. C.Narayanasamy Naidu Award for Highest Productivity in rice to Thiru. G.Selvakumar of Srivilliputhur Village, Virudhunagar District.

After the presentation of medals, the different Departments of Tamil Nadu Government paraded their decorative floats that highlighted their achievements. The Hon'ble Governor, the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister and other dignitaries witnessed the parade. The function came to a close with the rendering of the National Anthem. The Police Department and Health and Family Welfare Department floats won the First Prize, Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department won the Second Prize and Tourism Department, won Third Prize.

Tamil Nadu seeks Prime Minister's approval for big river linkage projects, Chennai Metro Phase II, more air services

Memorandum presented to Hon'ble Prime Minister of India **Shri Narendra Modi**, by Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami**, on 19.01.2021

1. Godavari – Cauvery Linkage

Request to expedite linking of Peninsular Rivers

National Water Development Agency (NWDA) prepared a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for Godavari - Cauvery (Grand Anicut) Link as Phase-I project of the Peninsular Rivers linkage and sent it to the States concerned for their comments during March, 2019.

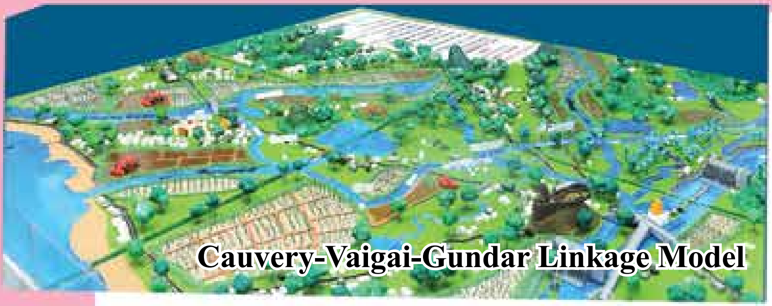
The Government of Tamil Nadu had justified the need to rework the link so as to terminate it in the River Cauvery at Kattalai Barrage, instead of Grand Anaicut and sent its comments to NWDA in September, 2019 and February, 2020. This request of Tamil Nadu is under the consideration of NWDA.

I have written letters to your goodself to provide atleast 200 TMC ft. of water to Tamil Nadu from this Phase-I project and ultimately 300 TMC ft. of water in Phase-II, when River Mahanadhi is linked with Godavari.

Since, inter linking of rivers, being a game changing development agenda of our Country, I request you to instruct the Hon'ble Minister of Jal Shakti, to finalise the DPR for this project and take up the work on priority basis, so that Southern States could be benefited from the inter basin transfer of flood water.

2. Cauvery-Gundar Linkage

Cauvery-Gundar linkage is a part of the Godavari–Cauvery linkage mentioned above. This diversion of surplus flow to the drought affected part of Tamil Nadu will benefit several Districts in the State. The State has planned to implement this linkage in 3 phases.



Cauvery-Vaigai-Gundar Linkage Model

The Government of Tamil Nadu has already constructed a Barrage at Mayanur across Cauvery River at a cost of about Rs.255 Crore in anticipation of this National Project.

The excess flood water of Cauvery River during surplus years can be diverted upto Gundar and therefore the Cauvery – Gundar link canal is of utmost importance to the State. The Government of Tamil Nadu has prepared a Project Report for the Cauvery (Kattalai) - Gundar link and requested the Government of India to accord in-principle approval and provide financial assistance to this mega project.

The Government of India, however, in November, 2020 informed that Tamil Nadu's proposal may have to be considered under Phase-II of National Perspective Plan, availability of surplus water for transfer upto Gundar to be considered as National Project.

Tamil Nadu was particular that immediately flood waters can be diverted from River Cauvery upto Gundar so as to benefit drought prone areas in the Districts of Karur, Tiruchirappalli, Pudukkottai, Sivagangai, Ramanathapuram, Virudhunagar and Thoothukudi and later on when Mahanadhi is linked upto Gundar under the National Perspective Plan would improve the recharge of ground water, meeting drinking water needs and stabilise the ayacuts.

Accordingly, considering the importance of this scheme, the Government of Tamil Nadu approved the Phase-I of the project of linking Cauvery river at Kattalai upto South Vellar river at a cost of Rs.6,941 Crore and works for Rs.331 Crore have been awarded for the first stretch of the project.

This project will have a profound impact on the flood management, besides augmenting the drinking water needs of the most drought prone areas on the State which will have lasting benefits to the people of Tamil Nadu.

I request you to direct the Ministry of Jal Shakti to sanction this Project as a National project on priority basis and provide financial assistance to this project, in view of its greater impact on vast drought prone areas of Tamil Nadu.

3. Rejuvenation of Cauvery and its Tributaries on the lines of Namami Gange

Request financial support for "Nadanthai Vaazhi Cauvery" programme to restore the sacred River Cauvery and its main tributaries.

The much acclaimed "Namami Gange", an Integrated Conservation Mission Flagship Programme taken up by The Hon'ble Prime Minister to abate the river pollution and rejuvenate River Ganga, has been a driving force to initiate rejuvenation of the River Cauvery.

The river Cauvery is the life line of Tamil Nadu and considered as one of the "Sacred river of South India". It is also known as "Ganges of South".

I made an announcement that river Cauvery would be rehabilitated and pollution in the river would be abated on the lines of "Namami Gange" Project.

The objectives of the project is to conserve, rejuvenate and augment the water resources

and to effectively stop sewage and industrial effluents from polluting the river Cauvery, by taking up several works like construction of ground water recharge structures construction of Barrages and artificial recharge sewage treatment plants management of solid and liquid waste generated from domestic and commercial sources upgradation and modernization of public amenities; river surface cleaning Bio-Diversity conservation and aforestation.

The Government of Tamil Nadu, conforming to the guidelines of the Government of India, has sent a Detailed Project Report for Rs.10,711 Crore to avail the eligible funding of Rs.1,958 Crore from Government of India and the balance would be funded by the State Government either through Private Public Participation (PPP) or by raising resources from financial institutions.

In order to launch the project immediately, based on the eligible funding assistance of Government of India, a detailed project report for Rs.1,632 Crore has been sent to Government of India for the sanction of its share of Rs.713.39 Crore and the balance shall be funded by the State Government. This is still under the consideration of the Government of India.

I request you to instruct the Ministry of Jal Shakti, to consider this project as a Special Project like Namami Gange and to accord sanction and extend financial assistance from Government of India for Rs.713.39 Crore sought by Tamil Nadu, at the earliest.

4. Chennai Metro Rail Project

Request to sanction revised project cost of Phase-I and DPR of Phase–II under 50:50 joint venture partnership basis

At the outset, I wish to express my gratitude for your active support for the Phase-II of the Chennai Metro Rail Project, that covers 118.9 km at an estimated cost of Rs.61,843 Crore. Hon'ble Union Minister for Home Affairs had laid the foundation for this Phase on 21st November, 2020.

It may kindly be recalled that in my letter dated 12.10.2020, I had requested approval of 50:50 equity sharing model for the Phase–II of the Chennai Metro Rail Project on the same pattern as Phase-I. The project cost has been finalized in consultation with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and the funding from JICA, ADB, AIIB and NDB have also been fully tied up with the support of Government of India.

I understand that the project proposal is under active consideration of Government of India, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. The Ministry in its letter dated 28.12.2020, had called for certain clarifications on sanctioning the project under 50:50 equity sharing model. The Government of Tamil Nadu has, on 05.01.2021, sent the requisite detailed proposal covering all the issues.

I therefore request the kind intervention of Hon'ble Prime Minister for early approval of the Phase-II under the 50:50 equity model.

5. Request for Air Services

(a) Request to introduce evening flight

services between Salem and Chennai under UDAN Scheme.

Salem is one of the industrial hubs in the State having industries such as Steel, Magnesite, Garments, Automobiles and Leather Industries. At present, only one return morning flight is being operated from Chennai to Salem, and no flights are operated in the evening and night hours.

Business Travellers are being put to hardship due to the single return flight and are using alternate modes of transport or they have to travel all the way to Coimbatore to take a flight.

I have been informed that the Airport Authority of India has completed the work at the Salem Airport for night landing of aircraft. I therefore request you to kindly instruct the Ministry of Civil Aviation to operate an evening/ night return flight from Chennai to Salem.

(b) Flight Services from Coimbatore Airport to UAE

Many passengers from Coimbatore, Erode and Tiruppur Districts of Tamil Nadu are travelling to Dubai in the UAE. So, there is a demand for operation of flights between Coimbatore and Dubai.

I request the Hon'ble Prime Minister to direct the Civil Aviation Ministry to introduce direct flight services between Coimbatore International Airport and Dubai in the UAE.

6. Financial assistance for the restoration of damages caused due to Cyclones "Nivar" and "Burevi" and the unprecedented heavy rainfall in January.

Tamil Nadu was ravaged by two successive Cyclones viz., 'Nivar' and 'Burevi' during the North-East Monsoon 2020. This was followed by heavy to extremely heavy downpours in Southern Districts and coastal areas due to an unusual extension of the North-East monsoon in the month of January causing extensive damage to Rabi (Samba) crops which have almost come to maturity stage.

The Cyclone 'Nivar' which hit the State of Tamil Nadu in the month of November, 2020, caused extensive damages to the infrastructure and to the Agricultural and Horticultural Crops.

A Memorandum was sent to Government of India on 01.12.2020 detailing the damages caused due to Cyclone 'Nivar' and seeking financial assistance of a sum of Rs.641.83 Crore towards temporary restoration and Rs.3,108.55 Crore towards permanent restoration of damages under NDRF as the fund available to the State was already exhausted for COVID-19 relief. The State has also made a request to depute the Central Team to make on the spot assessment of the damages caused due to the severe impact of Cyclone 'Nivar'. Subsequently, the financial assistance required for temporary restoration of damages caused by 'Nivar' cyclone was arrived at Rs.650.10 Crore. In my letter dated 01.12.2020, addressed to the Hon'ble Union Home Minister, I had also requested to release an immediate relief assistance of Rs.500 Crore to the State of Tamil Nadu under NDRF.

In continuation to this, the Inter Ministerial Central Team visited the State of Tamil Nadu from 05.12.2020 to 08.12.2020 to assess the damages caused due to Cyclone 'Nivar' and the release of funds from Central Government is still awaited.

While the relief and restoration works in respect of Cyclone 'Nivar' were being taken up on a war-footing basis, the State of Tamil Nadu was ravaged by another Cyclone 'Burevi' and its related heavy to extremely very heavy rainfall in the month of December, 2020. A Memorandum on the damages caused due to Cyclone 'Burevi' was sent to Government of India with a request to sanction financial assistance of Rs.485 Crore for providing relief to the people affected, for temporary restoration measures and Rs.1,029 Crore for permanent restoration of the damages caused due to the impact of Cyclone 'Burevi'. In my letter dated 15.12.2020 addressed to the Hon'ble Union Home Minister, Government of India, I had also requested to release a sum of Rs.1,000 Crore immediately towards providing immediate relief to the affected people of the State. The Government of India had deputed the Inter Ministerial Central Team to the State of Tamil Nadu and the Central Team visited many Districts affected by the Cyclone 'Burevi' from 28.12.2020 to 30.12.2020.

Pending the release of assistance from Central Government, the Government of Tamil Nadu has already sanctioned a sum of Rs.80 Crore towards relief and immediate restoration of damages caused due to Cyclone 'Nivar'. Further, the Government of Tamil Nadu has also sanctioned relief of Rs.26.60 Crore and Rs.565.45 Crore towards the damages caused to the agricultural and horticultural crops due to Cyclone 'Nivar' and Cyclone 'Burevi' respectively to about 5 Lakh farmers across the State.

During January 2021, unusually Tamil Nadu again had an unprecedented heavy rainfall in southern and coastal areas of the State due to continuation of the very aggressive North-East monsoon system. As against the normal average rainfall of 12.3 mm during January (01.01.2021 to 16.01.2021), the State has received over 136.6 mm of actual average rainfall, which is 1,011% higher than the normal average. In particular, the Cauvery Delta Districts and the Southern Tamil Nadu Districts had an unprecedented rainfall (averaging between 9 cm to 25 cm during a period of 24 hours) during the peak Samba harvesting period, thereby destroying the standing crops of the farmers which were almost ready for harvest. As per the initial assessment, crops in an extent of 4.5 Lakh hectares have been inundated and damaged during these unprecedented rains. The input assistance under National Disaster Response Fund Guidelines would itself amount to Rs.472 Crore.

I would like to bring to your kind notice that as on 13.01.2021 a total sum of Rs.2,615 Crore has been sanctioned under State Disaster Response Fund towards preparedness and relief measures, institutional quarantine

facilities, Covid Care Centres, relief assistance for the people affected by 'Nivar'and 'Burevi' cyclones etc., to the District Collectors and Line Departments and hence at present there is a deficit balance of Rs.1,255 Crore under the State Disaster Response Fund. I also wish to add the two Cyclonic systems that have hit during the North East Monsoon, 2020 and the continuation of the recent heavy downpours in the aftermath "Burevi" have aggravated the financial stress of the State of Tamil Nadu.

I request you to kindly consider the release of Central Financial Assistance immediately which would not only provide the much needed relief to the affected people of Tamil Nadu, but would also help to reduce the financial burden of the State of Tamil Nadu as the State has already started disbursing the input assistance for the damaged crops in anticipation of central release from NDRF. An immediate release of Rs.1,200 Crore for all the above damages may kindly be sanctioned.

7. Financial Assistance for Bulk Drug Park and Medical Devices Park

Government of Tamil Nadu is proposing to set up a Bulk Drug Park and a Medical Devices Park near Chennai.

The Bulk Drug Park is proposed to be located at Manallur, Gummidipoondi Taluk, Thiruvallur District in an extent of 2,000 acres. The proposed project cost for developing this project is Rs.2,153 Crore. The Medical Devices Park is proposed to be located near Oragadam in Kancheepuram District in an extent of 350 acres. The proposed project cost for developing this project is Rs.430 Crore.

These parks will have common and advanced infrastructure facilities like CETP,

Steam Systems, warehouses & Cold Storage, R & D Centre, Testing Facilities etc. The State Government will provide an attractive package of incentives to industries who will invest in these parks.

Tamil Nadu is one of the leading industrialised States in the country and is a top performer in sectors like Automobiles, Electronics and Textiles. However, in sectors like Pharmaceuticals and Medical devices, the State is yet to reach its full potential. Government of Tamil Nadu is seeking to correct this situation by developing the aforesaid Bulk Drug Park and Medical Devices Park. It would also fulfil Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

Government of Tamil Nadu has applied to the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers for financial assistance for Rs.1,000 Crore for Bulk Drug Park under 'Promotion of Bulk Drug Parks Scheme' and Rs.100 Crore for Medical Devices Park under 'Promotion of Medical Devices Parks Scheme'.

I request your intervention for early sanction of financial assistance for these projects.

8. Request to sanction Mega Textile Parks for Tamil Nadu

Government of India has proposed to

establish Mega Textile Parks across the country to achieve scale and reduced logistic costs which are imperative to compete in the global market.

Tamil Nadu is the leading State in Textiles. We are keen to participate in this Mega Textile Park scheme and I have written to Government of India expressing our intent.

The State has identified three suitable sites for setting up these Parks. The State will provide around 1,000 acres of land with requisite infrastructure such as uninterrupted power supply, water, connectivity in addition to single window facilitation for clearances.

I request you to kindly consider our request and sanction atleast two Mega Textile Parks for the State.

9. Fixing Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Milling Copra at Rs.150/- per kg for 2021 Season

Tamil Nadu is one of the major coconut growing States in the country, with an area of around 4.40 Lakh hectares and annual production of 47,064 Lakh nuts. Every year, based on the recommendation of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), the Government of India is declaring Minimum Support Price (MSP) for various agricultural crops, including Copra. For 2020 Copra Season, the Government of India has declared Rs.99.60/- per Kg as Minimum Support Price for Milling Copra.

The Coconut plantations in Tamil Nadu in the past three years are affected by various disasters in the form of Gaja cyclone in 2018 and Rugose Whitefly in 2019, Nivar and Burevi Cyclones in 2020. To add fuel to the fire, the Covid-19 pandemic has completely

devastated the Coconut industry to the core in 2020. The harvesting cost, transportation cost, demand for space for storage etc., has caused deep worry to the Coconut Growers. Moreover, the Coconut Processing Industry in the State has also suffered very much due to the Covid-19 pandemic. But, in major Copra Markets of Tamil Nadu, the present market price is ranging between Rs.120/- to Rs.125/- per kg and is expected to prevail in the same trend till the end of the season. The coconut farmers are deeply distressed on the prevailing market rate of Copra in the State. Hence, taking the above challenges into consideration, it is felt that the present MSP for Milling Copra of Rs.99.60/- per kg will not be adequate to compensate their cost of production.

As the Government of India had fixed the Minimum Support Prices for crops like Paddy, Ragi and Pulses at 150% of the cost of cultivation, the Coconut Farmers also need to be given adequate price for their produce which will enable them to overcome the increasing cost of production in the background of seasonal adversities, pest attacks and rising input costs.

I request that the Hon'ble Prime Minister may kindly advise the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare as well as the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) to consider the revision of the Minimum

Support Price (MSP) for Milling Copra from Rs.99.60/- to atleast Rs.150/- per kg for the current 2021 Copra season, for safeguarding the interest of the coconut growers in the country.

10. Release of Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu

I thank you for your intervention which has resulted in release of 40 Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu by the Sri Lankan authorities recently. All the 40 Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu are expected to reach India today (19.01.2021).

There are still 12 Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu who have been captured by Sri Lankan Navy recently and are in their custody. Sri Lankan strategy of keeping the boats of our fishermen is causing hardship to their livelihood.

I request your personal intervention and direction to the Ministry of External Affairs to urgently take up the issue with the highest authorities in Sri Lanka for the release the remaining 12 Indian fishermen and all the mechanised fishing boats currently in Sri Lankan custody.

11. Development of Vellapallam fishing harbour, Nagapattinam District and fish landing centres in 18 small fishing harbours of Tamil Nadu

For the development of fisheries infrastructure in the State, the Government of Tamil Nadu has sent proposals under Fisheries Infrastructure Development Fund for improving infrastructure of the fishing harbours in Tamil Nadu.

The proposals for the development of Vellapallam fishing harbour and other fish landing centres related infrastructure at 18 other small harbours have been sent to National Fisheries Development Board.

I request you to instruct the officials in the Department of Fisheries to expedite the proposals, so that the livelihoods of the fishermen of Tamil Nadu will be improved.

12. Expediting the setting up of the defence industrial corridor

A defence industrial corridor was announced by Government of India for Tamil Nadu comprising of nodes at Chennai, Tiruchirappalli, Coimbatore, Salem and Hosur. This corridor is aimed to create new defence production facilities and promote cluster with necessary testing and certification facilities units, export facilitation centres, technology transfer etc. The corridor was inaugurated in January, 2019 during the defence expo held in Chennai. Pursuant to this, the Government of Tamil Nadu has announced an Aerospace and Defence industrial policy and identified IIT, Madras as knowledge partner for the project.

I request you to kindly instruct the Ministry of Defence and DRDO to expedite the setting up of the defence industrial corridor, which will enhance the overall industrial development of Tamil Nadu.

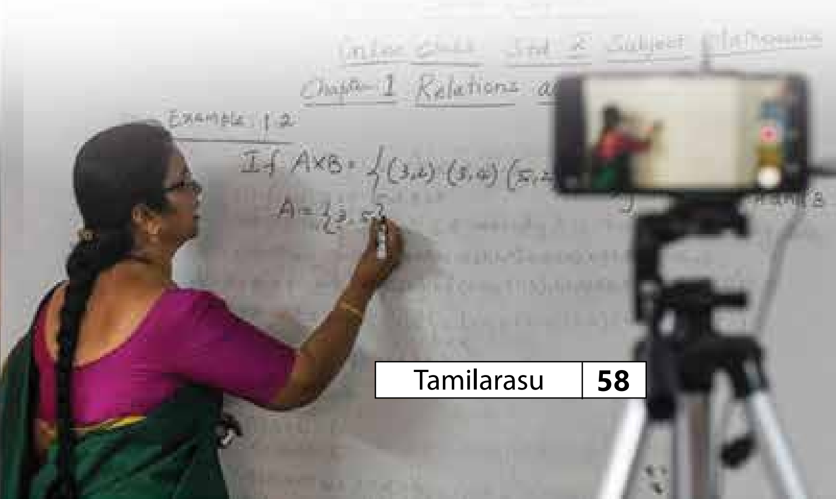
Measure aims to facilitate online education during COVID-19 pandemic

Hon'ble Chief Minister inaugurates scheme to distribute free data cards to 9,69,047 students

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami presented at the Secretariat, Chennai on 01.02.2021, data cards to nine college students for getting 2 GB data per day at no cost, to mark the inauguration of the scheme of distributing the same to 9,69,047 students.

In a statement released on 08.01.2021, the Hon'ble Chief Minister stated that with colleges remaining closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, educational institutions are conducting online classes in the interest of students. To help students join these classes, the Hon'ble Chief Minister announced that data cards will be distributed at no cost through ELCOT to 9,69,047 students studying in Government and aided arts and science colleges, polytechnic colleges, engineering colleges and to students of self-financing colleges who receive scholarship, to get 2 GB data per day for 4 months.

In accordance with the announcement, the distribution of the cards was inaugurated on 01.02.2021. The cards will enable students to get per day 2 GB data for 4 months- from February to May 2021. ■



Awards galore to Tamil savants

Hon’ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami presented on behalf of the Department of Tamil Development, 77 awards at the Secretariat, Chennai, on 01.02.2021 to Tamil scholars, Enthusiasts, Tamil institutions and Media for their services to the Tamil Language, Literary development and uplift of Tamil society and Honoured them. The awards are Thiruvalluvar Thirunaal Virudhugal, Chithirai Tamil New Year awards, ‘Tamizhar Thanthai’ C.P. Adithanar awards for dailies, weeklies and monthlies, Senthamizh Sorpirappiyal Akaramudali Thitta Iyakkam Awards, best translator awards, Madurai World Tamil Sangam awards and Thamizh Semmal awards.

By the way of honouring Tamil savants and scholars who work for Tamil language and Tamil literary development, Hon’ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma presented awards every year. In that way, the Government of Tamil Nadu that functions on the footsteps of Hon’ble Amma, Government of Tamil Nadu has selected the following persons for the Thiruvalluvar Day Awards 2021. Hon’ble Chief Minister, along with the awards presented each of them a cheque for Rupees One Lakh, one sovereign gold medal, citation and a shawl. The awardees are: Thiruvalluvar award for 2021 – Dr. Vaigai Selvan, for the year 2020 - the Thanthai Periyar Award – Thiru. A. Tamizhmagan Hussain, Annal Ambedkar Award – Thiru. Varagur A. Arunachalam, Perarignar Anna Award – Late Thiru. Kadambur M.R.Janarathanan (received by his son Thiru. Kudiarasu Janarathanan), Perunthalaivar Kamarajar Award – Dr.S.Devaraj, Mahakavi Bharathiyar Award – Kavignar Poovai Senguttuvan, Pavendar Bharathidasan Award - Thiru. Arivumathi alias Madhiazhagan, Thamizh Thendral Thiru. Vi.Ka. Award – Thiru.V.N. Swami and Muthamizh Kavalar Thiru. K.A.P. Viswanatham Award – Dr. V. Sethuramalingam.

Chithirai Tamil New Year Awards: TamizhThai award for 2020 – V.G.P. World Tamil Sangam was selected and Hon’ble Chief Minister presented a cheque for Rs.5 Lakh as the award amount, a shield, a citation and shawl to the President of that Sangam Kalaimamani Dr. V.G.Santhosham and Joint Secretary Thiru. V.G.P. Rajadas; Kapilar award – Thiru. S. Ezhumalai; U.Ve. Sa. Award – Thiru. K. Rajanarayanan (received

Annal Ambedkar Award

Thanthai Periyar Award

by his grandson Thiru. Deepan); Kambar Award –Dr.H.V. Hande; Sollin Selvar Award – Thiru. Nagai Mugundan; Umaru pulavar Award - Thiru. M.A. Syed Hasan alias Paridasan; G.U.Pope Award – Tmt. Ulrike Niklas of Germany (received by her son Desikan), Ilango Adigal Award – Thiru. M. Vaithialingan, Award Amma Literary – Dr. T. Mahalakshmi, Singaravelar Award – Thiru. A. Azhagesan, Maraimalai Adigalar Award – Thiru. Marai T. Thaymanavan; Iyothee Thass Pandithar Award – Dr. Chellammal, Arutperunjothi Vallalar Award – Dr. Ooran Adigal, Karaikal Ammaiyar Award – Dr. M. Gnanapoongothai, and Chief Minister Computer Tamil Award (for 2019)- Thiru. S.Rajaraman. With the award, they were presented a cheque for Rupees One Lakh each, one sovereign gold medal, citation and shawl.

Thamizhar Thanthai C.P. Adhithanar Awards for the year 2020 : Daily – For Dinamani – received by Thiru. Sidharth, Managing Director and Thiru. K.Vaidhyanathan, Editor, Weekly – for Kalki - Thiru. Ramanan, Editor in charge; Monthly – Senthamizh – Thiru. R. Sadasivam, Editor. Alongwith the award, Hon'ble Chief Minister gave them each a cheque for Rupees One Lakh, shield, citation and a shawl.

The Senthamizh Sorpirappiyal Akaramudali Thitta Iyakkam's award named after Devaneyapavanar for the year 2020 was presented by the Hon'ble Chief Minister to Dr. Ku. Sivamani. Along with the award a cheque for Rupees One Lakh, one sovereign gold medal, a citation and a shawl were presented.

The awardees for the Best Translator award for the year 2020 were: Late Thiru. S. Seshachalam (represented by his son Thiru. Gopinath), Dr. Rama. Gurunathan, Thiru. P. Gunasekar, Dr. Padmavathi Vivekanandan, Tmt. S. Jothirlatha Girija, Thiru. J. Ramki alias Ramakrishnan, Swami. Vimoorthanandar, Tmt. Meera Ravisankar, Tmt. Thilakavathi and Thiru. Krishna Prasad. Along with the award, they were presented a cheque for Rupees One Lakh, a citation and a shawl.

Madurai World Tamil Sangam Awards for the year 2020: for Literature - Dr.Alecsisu Devarasu Senmarg of France, for Linguistics – Dr. Suba Thinnappan of Singapore (represented by his daughter Tmt. Inbamani). Along with the awards, they were presented a cheque for Rupees One Lakh each, a citation and a shawl.

Thamizh Chemmal Award for the year 2020 (one for each District) – Awardees are: Thiru. J.V. Karuppusamy (Chennai), Thiru. Venu Purushothaman (Thiruvallur), Dr. S. Sadasivam (Kancheepuram), Dr. S. Akbar Sousar (Vellore), Thiru. M. Murugakumaran (Krishnagiri), Dr. R. Venkatesan (Tiruvannamalai), Thiru. Parikal N.Chandran (Vishupuram), Dr. J. Raja (Cuddalore), Dr. A. Senthilkumar alias Thamizhkumaran (Perambalur), Dr. S. Chitrarasu (Ariyalur), Kavignar Pon Chandran (Salem), Pavalar Peru.Mullaiyarasu (Dharmapuri), Dr.K. Sengottaiyan (Erode), Tmt. C. Karthika (Karur), Thiru. M.G.Anwar Basha (Coimbatore), Dr. Durai Angusamy (Tiruppur), Thiru. M. Prabhu (The Nilgiris), Thiru. Somaveerappan (Tiruchirappalli), Thiru.G.Venkataraman@Geevee (Pudukkottai), Thiru. R. Sethuraman (Sivagangai), Thiru. Pazha Maravarman (Thanjavur), Thiru. Rama Velmurugan (Thiruvarur), Thiru. M.Gopalasamy (Nagapattinam), Thiru. A. Muniaraj (Ramanathapuram), Dr. P. Sathiamoorthy (Madurai), Thiru. T. Thyagarajan (Dindigul), Thiru.T. Karunaisamy (Theni), Kavignar Sura alias S. Ramachandran (Virudhunagar), Thiru.V. Senthilnayakam (Tirunelveli), Thiru. S. Kamarasu @ Muthalankurichi Kamarasu (Thoothukkudi), Thiru. P. Lazar @Mulankuzhi, P. Lazar (Kannniyakumari), Dr.S. Saravanan (Thirupattur), Thiru. Nandivaram P. Sampathkumar (Chengalpattu), Kavignar Panappakkam K. Sugumar (Ranipet), Thiru. M. Narayanan (Tenkasi), Thiru. S. Udhiyan (Kallakurichi), and Thiru. Durai Gunasekaran (Mayiladuthurai). All with the awards, they were presented a cheque for Rs.25,000/- each, citation and a shawl.

In the Demands for Grants for the Department of Tamil Development for the year 2020-2021, it was announced that the Arabic translation of Thirukural, released by Government of Tamil Nadu received a great global recognition lifting up the glory of Tamil Language. Taking this into consideration, Thirukural in Arabic language, set to music will be released. In accordance with this announcement, Prof. Dr. Jahir Husain, Faculty of Arabic, Madras University, produced a disc containing Thirukural in Arabic set to music, at a cost of Rs.2.25 Lakh. Hon'ble Chief Minister released that disc – Thirukural Arabic – musical disc – and Prince of Arcot Thiru. Mohammed Abdul Ali received it.

Hon'ble Chief Minister hands over third instalment for studio in the name of Puratchi Thalaivi Amma

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami handed over a cheque for Rs.3.50 Crore on behalf of the State Government at the Secretariat, Chennai on 04.02.2021 to Thiru. R.K. Selvamani, President of the Film Employees Federation of South India (FEFSI) for setting up 'Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma' studio floor near the M.G.R. Centenary studio floor at Paiyanur, Chengalpattu, for shooting films.

A request was made to the Hon'ble Chief Minister at the opening ceremony of M.G.R. studio floor on 26.08.2018 for construction of another studio floor near the M.G.R. Centenary studio floor, created by film artists and employees. Acceding to the request, Hon'ble Chief Minister said Rs. 5 Crore would be given on behalf of the Government for setting up a studio in the name of Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma.

Accordingly, Hon'ble Chief Minister handed over a cheque for Rupees One Crore on 16.09.2019 as the first instalment and Rs.50 Lakh on 01.06.2020 as the second instalment to Thiru. Selvamani. In fulfillment of the commitment, the third instalment of Rs.3.50 Crore was handed over today (04.02.2021).

Hon'ble Chief Minister inaugurates distribution of Pongal gift hampers to construction workers

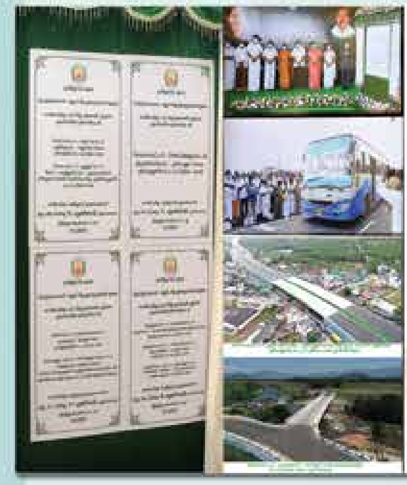
To mark the first ever distribution of Pongal Gift Hampers to construction workers in Tamil Nadu who have registered with their Welfare Board, functioning under the Department of Labour and Employment, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami presented at the Secretariat, Chennai on 08.01.2021, gift hampers to 7 construction workers as a token of covering 12,69,550 such workers for the benefit. The gift hamper consists of a dhoti, angavastram/ saree and raw rice, dhal, oil, ghee, jaggery, cardamom, cashew and raisins.

Many welfare schemes for construction workers are implemented through their Welfare Board, including financial assistance of Rs.5 Lakh in the event of death due to accident, Rs.20,000 in case of natural death, a monthly pension of Rs.1,000/-, family pension of Rs.500/, assistance for maternity, marriage, and children's education, food at no cost in Amma Unavagam, hostels and mobile hospitals.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Hon'ble Amma's Government provided financial assistance and relief articles to workers in the unorganized sector who had lost their livelihood. Every construction worker registered with the Welfare Board was given twice Rs.1,000/-, 15 kg rice, one kg oil and one kg dhal as a special relief basket.

To help construction workers who have been severely affected economically because of lack of livelihood due to the Covid-19 pandemic, celebrate the 'Thai' Pongal festival with joy, Hon'ble Amma's Government ordered, for the first time, distribution of Pongal gift hampers to those workers who have registered with their Welfare Board. The Government allotted Rs.94.40 Crore for the distribution of the gift hampers that consist of a dhoti and angavastram to 5,94,147 male workers, sarees to 6,75,403 female workers, along with 2 kg raw rice, one kg dhal, 500 gm oil, 100 gm ghee, one kg jaggery, 5 gm cardamom, 25 gm cashew and 25 gm raisins.

Seven road bridges, one river bridge opened at total cost of Rs.85.73 Crore



Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami declared open through video conferencing at the Secretariat, Chennai on 08.01.2021, seven road bridges and a river bridge across the State, constructed by the Department of Highways and Minor Ports at a total cost of Rs.85.73 Crore.

Realizing the importance of road infrastructure facilities in the social and economic development of the State and to increase the capacity of roads in tune with the growing traffic needs and ensure safe travel, the Government of Tamil Nadu that functions on the path of Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma is implementing with a focus works like construction of new bridges all over the State, laying of quality roads in needed places and maintenance of roads and bridges.

Accordingly, the following bridges were declared open: a bridge at Ariyanur on the Tiruchengode-Ariyanur road (National Highway 544) at the point 32/4 KM, Salem Taluk (South), Salem District (Rs.45 Crore); a bridge at Thendral Nagar (Rs.2 Crore) on Rajapalayam-Shenbagathoppu (via Ayyanarkoil) road, Rajapalayam Taluk, Virudhunagar District; a bridge at Maninagar (Rs.6 Crore) on Thisayanvilai-Udangudi road, Sathankulam Taluk, Thoothukudi District; a bridge at Sengamedu (Rs.3.90 Crore) on Sengamedu-Manamadai-Vettikadu road, Karambakudi Taluk, Pudukkottai

District; a bridge at Pulanandapuram (Rs.6.33 Crore) on Pulanandapuram-Kuchanur road, Uthamapalayam Taluk, Theni District; a railway under bridge at Kannappan Nagar (Rs.14 Crore) on Gandhiji Road, Coimbatore Taluk (North), Coimbatore District, to replace the level crossing number 13 between the Peelamedu and Coimbatore (North) railway stations; a road bridge at Pungamaduvu (Rs.3.50 Crore) on the Puzhuthikuttai-Sandhumalai road, Vazhapadi Taluk and a river bridge across Vasishta Nadhi (Rs.5 Crore) on Salem-Ulundurpet Ammampalayam Narikuravar colony road, Athur Taluk (both in Salem District).

The Hon'ble Chief Minister also released a hand book 'Ready Reckoner for Highways Engineers' for the use of all engineers in the Highways Department.

74th Death Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi

On the 74th death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Banwarilal Purohit**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami**, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister **Thiru. O. Panneerselvam**, Hon'ble Ministers, MPs, MLAs, Chief Secretary Thiru. K. Shanmugam I.A.S. and other high officials paid floral tributes to a portrait of Mahatma Gandhi, placed near his statue on the Marina Beach, Kamarajar Salai, Chennai on 30.01.2021.

‘Drive for an accident-free Tamil Nadu’

Message of Hon’ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami** for the 32nd National Road Safety Month (English Translation).

Every year ‘Road Safety Week’ is observed with a view to avert accidents and fatalities by creating awareness about road traffic rules among the people. This year, the 32nd ‘National Road Safety Month’ will be observed for a month – from 18.01.2021 to 17.02.2021 – by focusing on the theme, ‘Road Safety-Life Safety’.

Road safety is following traffic rules by every individual and avoiding accidents. Many families are affected mentally and economically on account of loss of life, limbs and grave injuries caused by road accidents. Hence, people’s participation in road safety awareness is very important.

During National Road Safety Month, various events to create awareness about road safety are organized. These include wearing of helmet and fastening of seat belt, taking pledge not to use mobile phones while driving, conducting medical camps for drivers, cultural events to create awareness about road safety, special vehicle tests and identification of roads where accidents occur frequently.

Hon’ble Amma’s Government has been implementing many safety measures like production of documentaries, preparing jingles and broadcasting them through All India Radio, forming patrol teams to monitor violations of traffic rules in National and State highways and taking action on them and presenting Chief Minister’s award to the best three Districts and the best Police Commissionerate by way of encouraging road safety measures. Also, the Tamil Nadu Road Safety Mission has been set up to achieve the target of a road accident-free Tamil Nadu. Road safety awareness has also been created through a decorated float in the Republic Day pageantry in 2020 and through road safety messages printed in the back wrapper of postal savings bank account books.

Road accident fatality in 2020 has come down to 54.04 per cent against the base year of 2016 as per the guidelines of the Supreme Court’s Road Safety Committee road accidents have come down to 38.23 per cent. Also, the number of fatalities for every 10,000 vehicles has come down from 19 persons in the year 2000 to 2 persons in 2020.

I affectionately request all people to help create an accident-free Tamil Nadu by following the State’s road safety measures, observing road rules in toto, averting accidents and protecting their own invaluable life. ■

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami**, at the Secretariat, Chennai on 01.02.2021, handed over data cards at no cost with usage capacity of 2 GB per day to 9 students, as a token of inaugurating the scheme to distribute such cards through ELCOT for use between February 2021 to May 2021, to 9,69,047 students in Government Arts and Science Colleges, Polytechnic Colleges, Engineering Colleges and Private Colleges receiving Government aid. The scheme is aimed to help the students to attend online classes when the colleges are closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tamilarasu

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Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami** paid floral tributes to the portrait of **Bharat Ratna Puratchi Thalaivar Dr. M.G.R.**, Placed near his statue in the Tamil Nadu Dr. M.G.R. Medical University campus, Guindy, Chennai on 17.01.2021 in connection with the 104th birth anniversary.

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